

# IOWA BIRD LIFE

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Summer 1989 Volume 59 Number 3



IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION

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FRONT COVER: Red-tailed Hawk, Laurens, 1 November 1988. Photo by Kathy Bayer.

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The IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION, founded in 1923, encourages interest in the identification, study, and protection of birds in Iowa and seeks to unite those who have these interests in common. *Iowa Bird Life* and *I.O.U. News* are quarterly publications of the Union.

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Original manuscripts, notes, letters (indicate if for publication), editorials, and other materials relating to birds and bird finding in Iowa should be sent to the editor. Accepted manuscripts will generally be published promptly, depending on space available, with the following absolute deadlines: 15 November for the Winter issue; 15 February for the Spring issue; 15 May for the Summer issue; and 15 July for the Fall issue. Most manuscripts will be refereed. All material should be typed double-spaced or hand printed in ink on 8 1/2 by 11 inch paper. Authors should pattern their style after a current issue of the journal. If you want more detailed guidelines or advice regarding the appropriateness of your topic for *Iowa Bird Life*, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to the editor.

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\*17-20 May 1990, La Crosse, Wisconsin (joint meeting with Minnesota and Wisconsin)

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Anyone observing birds in Iowa is encouraged to report their findings on a quarterly basis to the Field Reports editors. Sample reporting and documentation forms suitable for duplication are available from the editor (send self-addressed stamped envelope to T. H. Kent, 211 Richards St., Iowa City, IA 52246). An article describing the reporting process is also available.

Deadlines for receipt of field reports are as follows:

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## IOWA BIRDLINE 319-338-9881

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## I.O.U. NEWS

Send items of interest for the newsletter to the editors (J. Hank and Linda Zaletel, 715 West St., Colo, IA 50056).

## MATERIALS AVAILABLE

The following materials may be obtained by writing the editorial office (Iowa Bird Life, 211 Richards St., Iowa City, IA 52246):

\*Order form for back issues of *Iowa Bird Life*: send self-addressed stamped envelope.

\*Field Checklist of Iowa Birds—1987 Edition: 10 for \$1.65, 25 for \$3.50, 100 for \$11.60, postpaid.

Also available at annual meetings for \$0.10 each.

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## ADDRESS CHANGES

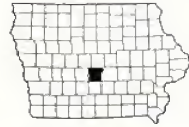
Please send address changes/corrections to Francis Moore, 336 Fairfield St., Waterloo, IA 50703.

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# BIRDING NORTHERN POLK COUNTY FOR SHOREBIRDS

HANK ZALETEL AND STEVE DINSMORE

The Cary Lobe of the Wisconsin glacier advanced as far south as southern Polk County. Many low, wet, poorly-drained areas between the Des Moines and Skunk river watersheds lie north of the terminal moraine of this glaciated area in northern Polk County. Two clusters of wet areas east of Polk City and southeast of Elkhart are presented in this article.

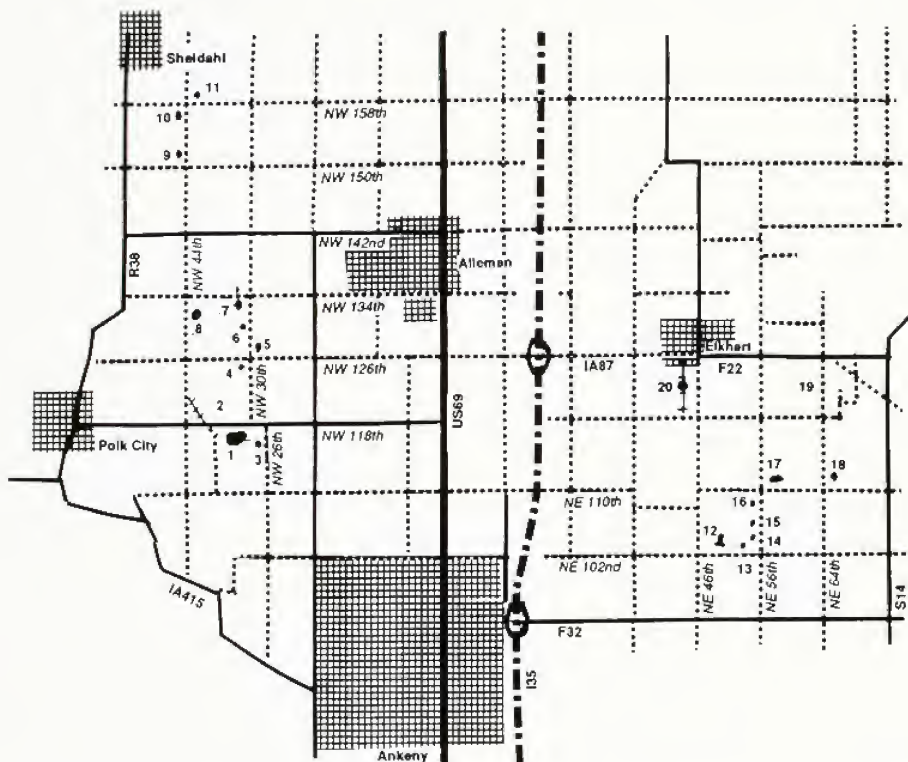


Birding in these areas is best during migration, particularly in wet years, with shorebirds and waterfowl being of most interest. Shorebirds found here have included all of the common species and American Avocet, Whimbrel, Ruddy Turnstone, Buff-breasted Sandpiper, and Red-necked Phalarope. Nesting species include Gray Partridge, Upland Sandpiper, Loggerhead Shrike, and Yellow-headed Blackbird. Other birds of interest have been Eared Grebe, Snowy Egret, Little Blue Heron, Cattle Egret, both night herons, Greater Scaup, Franklin's Gull, Water Pipit, and Smith's Longspur.

Twenty areas that are shown on the map are listed below by description and location, starting with the areas near Polk City and ending with the areas near Elkhart. They are listed in an order convenient for touring. The areas near Elkhart are also called the Ankeny Ponds. The majority of the wetlands in the Elkhart area are tiled and farmed during dry periods. All of the areas are on private property.

## POLK CITY AREA

1. A large flooded field, known locally as Moeckley Prairie, is located on the south side of NW 118th Ave. and 2.3 mi. east of Polk City. The only place to park on this unmarked, heavily travelled blacktop county road is on the narrow, sloping shoulder, so caution is advised. Stopping here in early morning or late evening minimizes the problem. This pond holds water very well and will often have water long after all the other ponds have dried up. It is the largest and probably the most productive of all the ponds listed.
2. The real Moeckley Prairie is a privately owned area on the north side of the road opposite (1). The best access is from NW 118th Ave. or from the railroad tracks along the west edge of the area. Upland Sandpiper, Gray Partridge, and Loggerhead Shrike nest here. A few ducks and shorebirds occur in the small wet areas scattered throughout the prairie. Smith's Longspur was seen here once.
3. A low area that lies 0.1 mi. west of NW 26th St. and 0.3 mi. south of NW 118th St. usually has water and is good for shorebirds.
4. A small flooded area south of NW 126th Ave. and just west of NW 30th St. usually has shorebirds but dries up quickly.
5. A large flooded area 0.1 mi. north of 126th Ave. on the east side of NW 30th St. is an excellent spot for shorebirds and offers excellent viewing. Unfortunately, the field has been recently tiled and no longer holds water for extended periods.



6. A small pond 0.6 mi. north of 126th Ave. on the west side of NW 30th St. usually has a few shorebirds and holds water well.
7. A large pond on the south side and a small pond on the north side of NW 134th Ave. just west of NW 30th St. are excellent for shorebirds and hold water for extended periods.
8. A large pond 100 yards east of NW 44th St. and 1.6 mi. north of NW 188th Ave. is good for shorebirds, although it does not allow close viewing.
9. A small pothole on the west side of NW 44th St. and 0.3 mi. north of NW 150th Ave. is good for shorebirds but dries up rapidly, even after heavy rains.
10. A marshy area with small pond southwest of the intersection of NW 44th St. and NW 158th Ave. often has an abundance of shorebirds despite the small size of the pond.
11. A small pothole on the north side of NW 158th Ave. and 0.2 mi. from NW 44th St. only has water during extremely wet periods.

#### ELKHART AREA (ANKENY PONDS)

12. A large pothole on the north side of NE 102nd Ave. is reached by exiting I 35 at interchange 92 and proceeding east 3 mi. on F32, north 1 mi. on NE 46th St., and east 0.3 mi. on NE 102 Ave. Much of this pothole is concealed from the road. Herons and egrets have been seen here.



13. A large, tiled pothole on the north side of NE 102 Ave is 0.3 east of (12). This area is good for waterfowl and shorebirds.
14. A large, shallow pan pothole on the west side of NE 56th St. and north of NE 102th Ave. is the first of three potholes in this mile stretch of wetlands. Small species at the back of the pond are difficult to view.
15. A natural marsh comprises the second pothole on this mile stretch. Yellow-headed Blackbirds and American Bitterns have been found here.
16. The third pothole at the north end of the mile stretch is also a natural marsh. Sora and Yellow-headed Blackbird nest here.
17. A long, shallow pothole on the north side of NE 110th Ave. is just east of NE 56th St.
18. A natural marsh northeast of the intersection of 110th Ave. and NE 64th St. has produced waterfowl, herons, and egrets.
19. Numerous bluebird and martin houses erected by Dean Mosman on NE 64th St. 0.4 mi. north of NE 118th Ave. are an example of what one man can do to make his environment more hospitable to wildlife, especially birds. It is truly a sight to behold.
20. A natural marsh 0.4 mi. south of Elkhart on both sides of the Chicago and Northwestern railroad tracks can be reached by the adventurous birder who wants to walk the tracks carrying a telescope.

# THE FINE ART OF DOCUMENTATION

ANN JOHNSON

Just to set the record straight, I really am a firm believer in the reporting and documenting of bird sightings in our state; but I have always relied on others to do the job. More persons reporting, however, in combination with comprehensive geographical coverage, enhances the true avian picture across the state. Observations by birders help provide a general view of the environment which has value beyond the competition we may use to amuse ourselves. After thirty years of developing some semblance of skill in identification, the guilt began developing about never taking the time nor putting forth the effort to report the various bits of data collected over the years and document unusual occurrences. As a well-traveled birder, a recent article in one of the journals really hit home when it was reported that many states have been unable to add unusual birds to their state records because visiting birders have failed to document them.

Documentation is the scare tactic used to convince normally coherent birders that they have absolutely no idea what they are doing. The integration of science and humanities is incredible. The art form itself is a combination of scientific observation, analysis of thought, creative but descriptive written communication, and logical argument for making a case. Tie this in with sufficient research and the task looks overwhelming.

Two circumstances last fall totally disrupted my normally relaxing pastime. First, my son's adolescence and corresponding lessening of time demands provided many more hours afield, significantly increasing the odds of stumbling onto some good birds. Second, the drought of 1988, along with the existence of small pockets of water in our creek bed, created an absolutely incredible fall warbler migration. My curiosity was piqued as to the number of species my yard might host during the season. This led to daily notations in a notebook and the conclusion that, if you compile all this data, you just as well report it. The drawback became evident upon the encountering of species I never expected to see.

Many of us can think of instances where well-intentioned friends and neighbors have reported some incredible sight to us and we politely acted mildly interested and then went on about our business. Now ponder the responsibility of the Records Committee as they ascertain if such sightings are reliable. Their job is to legitimize any unusual avian occurrence in the state of Iowa and not unlike a court of law, clear and convincing evidence must satisfy them beyond a reasonable doubt. It is better to reject any number of legitimate sightings than to allow bogus or questionable reports to become part of the archives. Often the committee has nary a clue as to the skills of the observer; in fact, their objectivity is probably served best without any knowledge of the observer's identity. The judgement of a record boils down, then, to the reporter's ability to describe what was seen and to argue successfully for an identification consistent with the observation.

Two warblers became my nemesis last fall and gave me my first attempts at documentation. The identification was relatively easy with a little careful observation and, after all these years, I do have confidence in my abilities to sort out most of them. Their stopover in my yard, however, forced me into



doing something I had never done before—putting pen to paper to describe what I had seen. Both records were insufficiently detailed to be accepted, and, if I am ever in legal trouble, I want the Records Committee as my jury! With a 99.9 percent surety factor (I seldom allow for no margin of error) this obviously means I did a poor job of not only describing the birds but making strong arguments for their accurate identifications through the elimination of similar species.

In an effort to better understand the process, improve my skills, and receive more feedback, I decided to risk any credibility I may have had and, abandoning my normally more conservative approach, submitted a couple of documentations for the winter season with about a seventy-five percent surety factor—not particularly good odds for identification, let alone substantiation. Wintering gulls, which are extremely difficult for me to describe, provided perfect subjects for documentation attempts. Barb Wilson, who says "Just Call Them All Seagulls" (*Iowa Bird Life* 56:3), may soon have a convert. My apologies and gratitude go to the Records Committee for intruding on their valuable time in reviewing records, but in my mind's eye they have certainly lived up to their task of verifying "extraordinary bird sightings" in our state.

I will never be one hundred percent in agreement with some of the assessments of my records, but that is alright. My Prairie Warbler will always be mine; I can still see it in the front yard today; and I will continue to submit reports, acceptable or not. My experiences over the past year have taught me a lot about coping with the trials of documentation and to those who are willing to try, I offer my keys for having a successful experience.

#### AJ'S TEN KEYS FOR DOCUMENTATION

1. Forget the ego trip and never take anything too personally. Document for yourself. Only you know what you saw and if nothing else, your written description may bring back pleasant memories. If the committee, whose purpose it is to be skeptical, accepts your record it becomes a bonus. It helps to remember that the reviewers are individuals who over the years have been perfecting their skills and their adeptness at this process qualifies them to serve on the Records Committee. Be a risk taker—even with all your insecurities you may be right; and even if your description is not an acceptable record, you may not necessarily be wrong.
2. Make as many notes as possible before opening the field guide, no matter how great the temptation. Problems develop in two directions once a picture is seen. In maintaining the integrity of the report, it becomes easy to under-describe by becoming unclear in your mind what was real. By the same token, that picture may trigger some illusions that were merely that. Most importantly, be honest, even if it means a high rejection rate. You will seldom see enough to satisfy everyone, and most identifications are made on a few field marks which may or may not be sufficient for "beyond a reasonable doubt."
3. Re-live and describe your unconscious thought processes. The longer you have been birding, the more concerted effort this step takes, but it is an integral piece of the description. Without it, the obvious may not

appear in writing. Explain the steps you took in making your identification. No one else knows why you drew those conclusions.

4. Use graphic adjectives such as bold, subdued, vivid, bright, muted. Yellow with streaking may mean vivid yellow with bold streaking to pale yellow wash with muted streaking. Comparisons to common birds may prove helpful.
5. Know your anatomy when describing a bird, especially when subtle differences are the key to identification. Terms such as crown, mantle, primaries, secondaries, undertail coverts, mirrors, windows, superciliary, patagial, sub-terminal, axillaries, and the like are invaluable as descriptors. Describing the position of the bird when you saw it may help determine why you did or did not observe some key markings.
6. Describe what is not there, particularly if it can provide a key field mark. Errors of omission may make a perfectly acceptable identification an unacceptable record.
7. Practice judging distances and observation times. Both have a great impact on a report's validity and elapsed time is hard to guess when you are busy keying field marks. Make the distance clear in the body of your report; there is quite a difference between 200 feet and two football fields!
8. Do your homework. Although some people have more reference books than others, the major field guides give good ideas of what birds might be confused with your sightings. Remember, only you know why you did not identify some other way.
9. Assign a self-imposed percentage to your identification. If you are ninety-nine percent sure, you should be able to describe convincingly. Seventy-five percent should leave considerable doubt, which in all likelihood will be reflected in comments from the committee.
10. Do not get discouraged. Enjoy the challenge, learn from it, and keep on reporting.

Lest anyone think otherwise, I hereby confess that in the past six months I have broken all of these rules—some more than once! It is all part of the learning process. Documentation is an art, one which may develop more quickly in some than others of us, but one which inevitably sharpens one's powers of observation, cognitive reasoning, and communication techniques.

532 120th Avenue, Norwalk, Iowa 50211



# THE RETURN OF SANDHILL CRANES TO IOWA

JAMES J. DINSMORE

Prior to settlement of Iowa, Sandhill Crane probably was a common nesting species and an abundant migrant. As early as 1820, Edwin James saw large flocks of cranes migrating north along the Missouri River in Harrison County (Thwaites 1905). Even in the 1890s, it was not uncommon to see flocks of a hundred or even thousands of cranes in Winnebago and Hancock counties in spring (Anderson 1907). Although there are few specific records, Sandhill Cranes probably were fairly common nesters in northcentral and northwest Iowa. With settlement, the combination of hunting and loss of nesting habitat led to a rapid disappearance of nesting Sandhill Cranes from Iowa. The last nest reported in Iowa was one at the headwaters of the Iowa River near Hayfield in Hancock County in May 1894. As was common in those days, the eggs were taken for an egg collection (Anderson 1894).

By the early 1900s, even migrating Sandhill Cranes were rare in Iowa. Spurrell (1917) saw them in Sac County in most years from 1904 to 1915 but considered them only tolerably common to rare. For the next 60 years, there are very few reports of Sandhill Cranes from Iowa. I am aware of only four records in the 1940s, two in the 1950s, and two in the 1960s. There are a number of reports in the last half of the 1970s and an even greater number in the 1980s, indicating a return of the species to Iowa. In this article, I analyze the resurgence and patterns of occurrence of Sandhill Cranes in Iowa.

## METHODS

This article is based on an analysis of all reports known to me of Sandhill Cranes in Iowa from 1970 to 1988. Most of the records are cited as field reports in *Iowa Bird Life* and/or *American Birds*. Other published records are: 9 in November 1977, near Red Oak, Montgomery County (*Des Moines Register*, 19 November 1977); 29 on 29 March 1985, Badger Lake, Monona County (*Wildl. Notes* 4(1):38); 6 on 18 March 1987, Otter Creek Marsh, Tama County (*Wildl. Notes* 6(1):3); and 5 on 21 March 1987, near Washington, Washington County (*Wildl. Notes* 6(1):3). Other sightings substantiated by personal communications include: 1 on 3 April 1977, Otter Creek Marsh, Tama County (B. Proescholdt); 4 on 25 March to 3 April 1979, Dubuque, Dubuque County (B. Walton and B. Sheets); 1 on 13 February 1981, near Moravia, Appanoose County (J. Coffey); 2 on 7 April 1983, Union Slough National Wildlife Refuge, Kossuth County (J. Fleskes); 1 on 8 April 1984, west of Marshalltown, Marshall County (M. Huff); 2 or 3 on 23, 25 November and 2-3 December 1984, Mud Lake, Clay County (T. Neal); 5 or 6 in March 1985, Princeton, Scott County (A. Barker); 1 on 22 May 1987, Ingham Lake, Emmet County (T. Walrod); 1 on 12 May 1988, Goose Lake, Clinton County (A. Barker); and 1 in December 1988, Black Hawk Lake, Sac County (M. Mahn).

## RESULTS

The distribution of Sandhill Cranes by county, year, and month are shown in Figure 1. There were 11 reports from the 1970s, 9 of them from 1975 to 1979. The number of reports continued to increase in the 1980s, with at least 51 reports from 1980 to 1988. Several birds overwintered and were reported



in two years. After adjusting for these, a total of 61 crane records were available for study. During the first half of the 1980s, there were an average of 4.2 reports per year while there have been 7.5 reports per year in the last 4 years, a strong indication of an increase in the number of cranes occurring in Iowa.

Sandhill Cranes were reported in all seasons and in all months except June and August. By season, cranes were reported in spring (40), summer (1), fall (14), and winter (10). Several birds lingered into a second season after their arrival so season totals exceed the actual number of records. By month, cranes have been seen most often in March (16), April (15), November (11), May (10), and December (8).

Almost two-thirds of the records are from spring. Spring dates range from 2 March to 22 May. One at Amana in Iowa County on 10 February 1987 probably was a very early spring migrant rather than a wintering bird. Most of these reports (26/39) were from 9 March to 25 April with an average date of 8 April. This average is somewhat later than the usual peak of the massive crane migration through central Nebraska, which occurs in late March and is a potential source of the cranes found in Iowa. Somewhat surprising are the 10 reports from May. The high intensity of field activity by Iowa birders in May probably accounts for some of this.

The only summer record is the two adults that were seen repeatedly at Lylah's Marsh in Howard County in July (and September) 1988. Although there was no suggestion that these birds nested there, their presence is suspi-

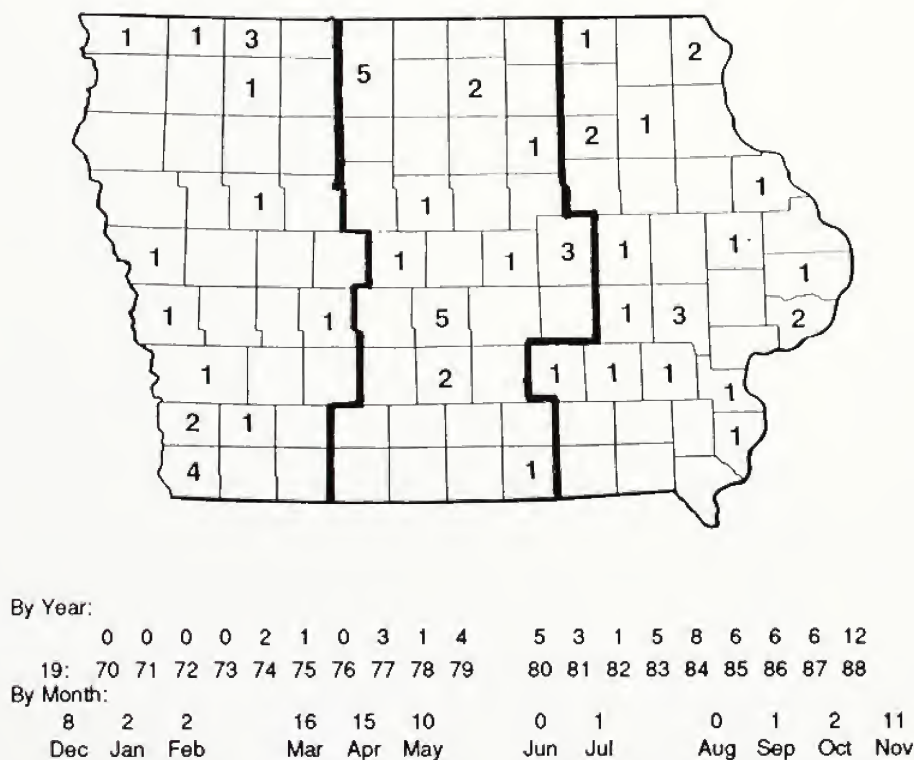


Figure 1. Sandhill Cranes in Iowa 1970-1988 by county, year, and month.

cious. Certainly birders in eastern Iowa and especially northeastern Iowa should watch for this species in the summer.

Exact dates are unavailable for three of the fall reports and another is one that arrived in summer and remained until September. The other fall records range from 3 October to 28 November; six of them occurred from 19 to 28 November, suggesting a late November peak.

Single cranes wintered near Randalia in Fayette County in 1979-80 (Schaufenbuel 1980) and between Moravia and Centerville in Appanoose County in 1980-81. One at Riverton Wildlife Area in Fremont County from 20 December 1980 to 7 January 1981 may have tried to winter there. Cranes were seen repeatedly from December 1988 into early 1989 at three sites: one on a pond near Saylorville Lake, three near Burlington, and one at Black Hawk Lake. All seemed to be wintering. In addition to these, one wintered near Orient in Adair County in 1949-1950 (Anon. 1950). Although cranes seem an unlikely winter bird in Iowa, they are hardy enough to survive very cold weather if they can find enough food to keep alive. The large amount of waste grain left behind by modern harvesting methods provides enough food in years that have little snow cover. Three other December records probably were just late migrants. One at Amana in Iowa County on 10 February 1987 probably was an early spring migrant.

Cranes have been reported from 38 counties from throughout Iowa (Figure 1). Counties with the most reports are Kossuth, Polk, Fremont, Dickinson, Johnson, and Tama. Six counties have two reports each. Eighteen of the reports are from the western third of Iowa, 22 from the central third, and 21 from the eastern third. This is somewhat surprising as I expected that the western third, with its proximity to the large migrating flocks that pass through central Nebraska, would have the most records. Likewise, I expected that eastern Iowa, being closest to the migrant and nesting birds in Wisconsin, would have more reports than central Iowa. Five of the central Iowa reports result from intensive field studies at Union Slough National Wildlife Refuge and somewhat skew the total for that region.

Most of the reports (32) are of a single bird with two the next most frequent number seen (9 reports). This suggests that most of the Iowa birds are stragglers rather than birds on a main migration flyway. Eight reports are of more than five birds. The only large flock was 250 seen near Inwood in Lyon County on 10 April 1982. Other sizable flocks were 29 at Badger Lake, Monona County, on 29 March 1985 and 20 in Scott County on 9 March 1986.

Few reports mention the age of the birds. Two of the four fall reports for which age was given were young birds. This is not unexpected as young birds probably would be more likely to wander out of their normal range. The birds that wintered in Fayette County and the bird at Saylorville in 1988-1989 also were young birds. If possible, it would be worthwhile to record age on future crane sightings.

## DISCUSSION

Several questions about the cranes need consideration. One is whether the increased number of sightings of Sandhill Cranes in recent years represents a real increase in the occurrence of the species in Iowa or is just the result of more birders being afield and a greater reporting rate of those birds that are seen. I think that it is probably a combination of both. There are certainly



more people who are reporting birds to the Field Reports section now than there were in the 1960s and early 1970s. On the other hand, the increase from only two total sightings in the 1960s to the current average of 7.5 reports per year is a striking increase and certainly reflects an increase in the bird's occurrence in Iowa.

Another question is where these birds are coming from. There are several possible sources: stray birds from the large flocks that pass through Nebraska on their way to and from their arctic nesting grounds, cranes that nest in northwest Ontario and migrate southwestward through Minnesota to join the flocks that pass through Nebraska, or strays from the populations that nest in Wisconsin, Michigan, Minnesota, and Canada (see McMillen 1988, p. 1214-1215). The lack of geographic separation of birds in Iowa makes it difficult to judge their origin. Most likely, those seen in far western Iowa are from the Nebraska flocks and those in northeastern Iowa are probably from the Wisconsin flocks. The other cranes, especially those in central Iowa, could come from either source. The only recent specimen, an immature taken in Tama County on 24 November 1979 (#1651, Iowa State University) belongs to one of the two subspecies that typically migrate through central Nebraska.

A final consideration is what is the future of cranes in Iowa. With the settlement of the Midwest, Sandhill Cranes largely disappeared as nesting birds from this region. One of the few places in the region that retained a nesting population was central Wisconsin; an estimated 25 pairs remained there in 1936 (Henika 1936). Since then, that population has increased and expanded its range, slowly at first but very rapidly over the last 15 to 20 years. In a 1984 breeding season survey, some 5,700 Sandhill Cranes were located in Wisconsin including some in counties adjacent to northeastern Iowa (Harris and Knoop 1987). Birds from this population almost certainly account for many of the sightings in northeastern Iowa. Although there is little suitable crane nesting habitat in northeast Iowa, some of the backwater areas along the Mississippi River and areas such as Cardinal Marsh, Sweet Marsh, Big Marsh, and Muskrat Slough may serve as places for the birds to nest. My own belief is that the species will attempt to nest in Iowa within the next few years.

#### LITERATURE CITED

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# REPORT OF RECORDS COMMITTEE FOR 1988

THOMAS H. KENT

The Records Committee reviewed 43 records from 1988 and reconsidered two old records. Of the 1988 records, 30 were accepted (one changed to *species*, two as possible escapes) and 13 (three of which are currently under reviewed by outside consultants) were not accepted. Four species were added to the state list in 1988: Magnificent Frigatebird, Snowy Plover, Red Phalarope, and Pomarine Jaeger. The two previous records of Mountain Plover were reconsidered and not accepted, thus removing this species from the state list.

The Committee reviewed its procedures and made some modifications. The categories for not accepted were reduced from three to one, and a new category for acceptably identified birds of questionable origin (escapes, introduced) was created. The current classification scheme is as follows:

- A-S = Accepted record based on an existing specimen or a specimen seen by a committee member and photographed.
- A-P = Accepted record based on a published photo or a photo on file with the Records Committee.
- A-R = Accepted record based on a sound recording on file with the Records Committee.
- A-D = Accepted record based on written documentation(s) on file with the Records Committee.
- A-E = Accepted identification (based on specimen, photo, recording, or written documentation), but the bird could be an escapee or is of a species that has been introduced and is not considered established in Iowa.
- NA = Not Accepted. This category covers a variety of circumstances such as "not beyond doubt", "not enough data to tell", "probably wrong identification", "definitely another species", "not seen well enough."

It was decided to send contributors (documenters) the votes and full text of reviewers' comments. Members are required to comment on all negative votes and to address the comments of negative voters on second reviews. The Committee agreed to ask the Iowa State University Library to serve as the archives for records reviewed by the committee. The files and photographs will be duplicated and a computer file of all records will be maintained by the Secretary.

The current documentation form (see backcover for availability) was endorsed by the Committee, although other forms will continue to be accepted. The Committee favors forms that allow the observer to describe a bird in his/her own way (as opposed to prompting for various anatomic parts). Documentations that do not photocopy well will be returned with a request for an exact translation.

The Committee will begin review of records of accidental species prior to 1980 that were not reviewed in 1980-1981. These include species where at least one specimen or photograph was available at that time. This will allow enumeration of all records of accidental species that have sufficient evidence for acceptance by current standards.

The Committee unanimously recommended modification of Item 3 under Committee Structure in the *Bylaws of the Records Committee* (Iowa Bird Life 56:111) as follows (new part in bold italics):

3. Qualifications for committee membership should include expertise in identification of birds, knowledge of Iowa birds, ~~and~~ familiarity with birders and birding localities in Iowa, ~~and a record of submitting well-written and researched documentations of birds in Iowa.~~

The recommendation was rejected by the Board of Directors (*Iowa Bird Life* 59:27).

Committee Members for 1988 with years in which their term expires were: Peter C. Petersen (1989), W. Ross Silcock (1990), Robert K. Myers who resigned and was replaced by Raymond L. Cummins (1991), Francis L. Moore (1992), Carl J. Bendorf (1993), Stephen J. Dinsmore (1994), and Thomas H. Kent (Secretary, appointed by other members). Robert I. Cecil will join the Committee in 1989.

## OLD RECORDS

**Mountain Plover:** After viewing and photographing this species in Colorado, one of the members (Kent) requested reconsideration of the two Iowa records. Don Roberson, Secretary of the California Records Committee, provided an extensive review and analysis of the record from Colo on 9-10 July 1986 and concluded that the bird was not a Mountain Plover. The original concern by Kent was based on posture, color, and behavior; Roberson pointed out specific plumage details that did not fit with Mountain Plover. The massive influx of early arctic migrants made Lesser Golden-Plover much more likely than Mountain Plover. The Colo bird was likely a first-year Lesser Golden Plover that remained in basic plumage. Roberson's comments on the Minnesota record of Mountain Plover that occurred a few days earlier led the Minnesota Records Committee to reconsider and reject their only record of this species (*The Loon* 60:146-148). The previous Iowa record from 25 March 1964 was also rejected; it lacked sufficient detail to exclude Lesser Golden-Plover.

## 1988 RECORDS ACCEPTED

**Red-throated Loon:** A juvenile bird at Saylorville Res. on 16 Nov. (\*Steve Dinsmore, \*Mark Proescholdt, \*Eloise Armstrong, \*Eugene Armstrong, *IBL* 59:9) was identified by small size, upturned lower mandible, and contrasting gray head and neck with darker back.

**Pacific Loon:** A juvenile at Lake Manawa from 23 to 28 Oct (*IBL* 59:9, 87) was closely studied.

**Magnificent Frigatebird:** A female at Clear Lake 26-26 Sep was photographed (*IBL* 59:9; 59(2):cover, 56-61). Sight records at Red Rock Res. were of a female on 2 Oct and a male on 3 Oct. The male was accepted as Frigatebird species because of the remote possibility of Great Frigatebird. See *IBL* 59:56-16 for discussion of previous unaccepted records.

**Black-bellied Whistling-Duck:** A bird at Ingham Lake, Emmet Co., was accepted in the category A-E (possible escapee). This species is said to be common in captivity, so it is difficult or impossible to tell vagrants from escapees. There are two previous Iowa records.

**Tundra Swan:** A well-documented immature at Red Rock Res. on 18 Dec (\*Ann Johnson) and 3 Jan 1989 (\*Steve Dinsmore) (*IBL* 59:48) was reviewed because of the interesting identification problem presented by immature swans (Peterjohn, B. 1986. Identification of immature swans. *Iowa Bird Life* 56:9-10).

**Trumpeter Swan:** An adult seen and heard at Ingham Lake, Emmet Co., on 21 Nov (*IBL* 59:10) was accepted in category A-E (possibly from introduced flock). The committee requests continued documentation of Trumpeter Swans. Observers should look closely for identifying tags and record their numbers if possible. It is unclear at the moment when this species will be considered as reestablished in Iowa.

**Brant:** A cooperative bird of the eastern race was seen and photographed near the visitors center on the Iowa side at De Soto N.W.R. from at least 18 Dec to 2 Jan 1989 (*IBL* 59:49, 88).

**Snowy Plover:** Singles, possibly the same bird, were photographed at Bays Branch, Guthrie Co., on 6-7 May and Dunbar Sl., Greene, on 22, 25 May (*IBL* 58:80, 86-87).

**Red Knot:** An adult in breeding plumage was at Union Slough N.W.R. on 5 Aug (*IBL* 59:13).

**Sharp-tailed Sandpiper:** A juvenile at Davenport on 30 Sep (\*Peter C. Petersen, \*Brian Blevins, *IBL* 59:13, 90) provided a second Iowa record for this very rare vagrant from Siberia.

**Curlew Sandpiper:** A slightly less rare Siberian vagrant in alternate plumage photographed at Coralville Res. on 13 May (*IBL* 58:81, 87-89) was also a second state record.



- Red Phalarope:** A bird mostly in basic plumage seen and photographed at Saylorville Res. from 30 Sep to 3 Oct (*IBL* 59:13, 19) provided a long-overdue first substantiated state record.
- Jaeger species:** Two sight records from Saylorville Res. submitted as Jaeger species were accepted: 28 Sep (\*Eloise Armstrong; *IBL* 59:13—incorrectly cited as 16 Nov) and 19 Nov (*IBL* 59:13).
- Pomarine Jaeger:** 2 juveniles extensively photographed at close range were at Saylorville Res. from 28 Sep to 2 Oct (*IBL* 59(1):cover, 13, 20-21).
- Parasitic Jaeger:** A juvenile described from Saylorville Res. on 28-29 Sep (*IBL* 59:13) was distinguished from the Pomarine Jaegers present at the same time by size, faster wing beat, and less extensive white in the wing.
- Franklin's Gull:** 1-2 breeding plumage adults seen at Saylorville Res. on 25 Dec 1988, 9 Jan 1989, and 21 Jan to 2 Feb 1989 (*IBL* 59:51) were reviewed because of the unusual date and plumage. A similar record was reviewed last year (*IBL* 58:74-76) and we have learned indirectly that wintering birds have been found in Missouri recently.
- Thayer's Gull:** Two of six records were accepted, both first-year birds: 1 Jan at Davenport (*IBL* 58:56) and 31 Dec at Montrose (\*Steve Dinsmore, *IBL* 59:42). Documentations of birds in Scott Co. on 5 and 9 Feb (*IBL* 58:56) were lost and not reviewed.
- Lesser Black-backed Gull:** Two records, probably of the same bird, were of an adult at Saylorville Res. on 15, 21, and 23 Nov and 4 Dec (*IBL* 59:14, 52).
- Great Black-backed Gull:** A bird with features of a second-winter bird was described at Saylorville Res. on 10 Dec (*IBL* 59:52).
- Sabine's Gull:** A juvenile was well described at Saylorville Res. on 20 Oct (*IBL* 59:14, 82).
- Vermilion Flycatcher:** A male was found at Rice Lake, Worth Co., on 13 May (*IBL* 58:82, 59:63).
- Rock Wren:** A cooperative bird at Saylorville Res. from 8 to 28 Nov was photographed (*IBL* 59:15, 22).
- Townsend's Warbler:** A male was seen briefly and described by a single observer at Wildcat Den State Park on 12 May (*IBL* 58:83, 59:62-63) for a second state record.
- Pine Warbler:** 1 at Norwalk, Warren Co., on 2 Sep (\*Ann Johnson, *IBL* 59:16) was accepted on second review after additional information was provided.

## 1988 RECORDS NOT ACCEPTED

- Yellow-billed Loon:** A fall loon (*IBL* 59:9) in immature or basic plumage with a yellow bill was not described in enough detail to be sure of such a rare possibility. A Yellow-billed Loon should have a pale distal one-half of the culmen and a post-auricular patch, among other findings.
- Ferruginous Hawk:** A spring bird (*IBL* 58:80) with suggestive description of an adult with apparent rufous leggings was not accepted on a split vote because of inconclusive details of a bird seen without binoculars at 200 yards.
- Prairie Falcon:** A fall falcon (*IBL* 59:12) was light colored and could have been an immature Peregrine Falcon of the tundra race. Axillaries were not observed.
- Semipalmated Sandpiper:** A record early bird on 27 March at Riverton A. (*IBL* 58:81) was identified primarily by size, leg color, and bill characteristics. After considerable research and two split votes, the record was sent to outside consultants for review.
- Western Sandpiper:** Two late fall birds (*IBL* 59:13), probably juveniles nearly molted to basic plumage, were identified primarily on the basis of bill shape and size. After two split votes, these records were sent to outside consultants for review.
- Little Gull:** A fall immature gull (*IBL* 59:14) the size of a Bonaparte's Gull seen at 200 yards had features suggestive of this species, but lacked the characteristic dark crown.
- Thayer's Gull:** A records from fall (*IBL* 59:14) and records from 3 Dec at Saylorville Res., 13 Dec at Red Rock Res., and 30 Dec at Saylorville Res. (*IBL* 59:52) were not accepted. Records of this species are among the most difficult for the committee to evaluate because much of the description is subjective. Those that are not accepted usually involve distant views, incomplete description of all of the field marks, and darker first-year birds that are difficult to tell from Herring Gulls.
- Great Black-backed Gull:** An adult at Davenport on 18, 19 Dec (*IBL* 59:42, 52) was documented by two experienced observers, but these documentations failed to eliminate all other dark mantled gulls to the satisfaction of some committee members.
- Prairie Warbler:** A fall warbler (*IBL* 59:16) at an unusual location and date for this species was seen briefly. The committee was not entirely convinced that other similar species were adequately excluded.



## FIELD REPORTS—SPRING 1989

STEPHEN J. DINSMORE

### WEATHER

The lack of precipitation that dominated 1988 continued this spring. There were no major late snowstorms, and March was cooler than normal with little precipitation. April continued this pattern with weekly precipitation totals lower than normal for all except the final week. The first major thunderstorms of the season occurred on 22 April when parts of northcentral Iowa received 4.5 inches of rain along with several tornadoes. By the end of April, heavy rain and tornadoes had also occurred in parts of central and southeast Iowa. Both March and April had below average rainfall. In general, April and May were cooler than normal, and northeast Iowa received light snow on 6 May. Another series of storms, again accompanied by some tornadoes, passed across Iowa in the last 10 days of May. Still, May rainfall was well below normal, and the January-May period was the seventh driest on record for Iowa. Statewide, through May, Iowa had received an average of 7 inches of precipitation compared to a normal of 11 inches. Generally it was driest in western and parts of northcentral Iowa and wettest in eastern Iowa.



### GENERAL TRENDS

The first big warming trend of the spring occurred on 6-8 March and many waterfowl, gulls, and other early migrants were detected at this time. Many of the rarer species of waterfowl occurred in Iowa this spring, possibly because they were concentrated in areas where there was ample water. Unusual for spring were reports of all three scoters. There were few flooded fields, and shorebirding was poor. Few reports of shorebirds were received; however, I saw 21 species of shorebirds on 19 May in southwest Iowa. The weekend of 22-23 April brought in many raptors and passerines, and many record early dates were set on these days. Notable warbler totals included 18 species on 28 Apr at Shimek Forest (RIC) and 20 species on 16 May in NC Iowa (THK). House Finches continue to increase exponentially and are now found statewide. Strong weather fronts were scarce this spring; few migrants were concentrated in Iowa. The cool weather in early May delayed leaf formation and made it easier to locate passerines this year than in the past few years. Overall, it was an average spring.

### UNUSUAL SIGHTINGS

Despite the dry spring, some excellent birds were found. Accidental species reported included Red-throated Loon, Tricolored Heron, Black Rail, Slaty-backed Gull, Mountain Bluebird, and Baird's Sparrow. Three of these (Tricolored Heron, Slaty-backed Gull, and Baird's Sparrow) would be firsts for Iowa. Casual species included Red-necked Grebe, Black Scoter, Surf Scoter, Ferruginous Hawk, Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, and Pine Grosbeak. Other rare species included Yellow Rail, Glaucous Gull, Common Barn-Owl,

Varied Thrush, Prairie Warbler, and Sharp-tailed Sparrow. The only exotic reported was an Egyptian Goose at Cardinal Marsh (TAS). In the mixed blood category were a Mallard/Northern Shoveler hybrid photographed in northwest Iowa (MMB) and a Brewster's Warbler in central Iowa.

## SPECIES DATA

\* = documented record.

**Red-throated Loon:** A rare spring report was of 2 on 27, 29-30 Apr at L. Manawa (\*TB, \*RKM, \*LPa/BPa, \*ML).

**Common Loon:** A bit early were 1 on 24-25 Mar at Lake Anita (AJ, DETH) and 1 on 25 Mar at Big Creek S.P. (SJD, BE). High count was 5 on 8 Apr at Rathbun Res. (RLC). The last of several late May reports was 1 on 30 May at Pine L. (MPR).

**Horned Grebe:** 1 was early on 18 Mar at Rathbun Res. (RLC); 5 on 14 Apr at Storm L. (DBi) were the most reported.

**Red-necked Grebe:** 1 was at Storm L. on 14 Apr (\*DBi).

**Eared Grebe:** 1 was early on 18-19 Mar at Big Creek S.P. (SJD). Many were reported in April and May with a high count of 9 on 25 May s. of Cherokee (MMB).

**Western Grebe:** 2 on 18 Apr at Silver L. (MMB), 3 on 21 Apr at Storm L. (DBi), 1 on 21 Apr at De Soto N.W.R. (DETH), and 1 on 21, 23 Apr at Smith L., Kossuth Co. (MCK) constitute an above-normal number of reports of this rare spring migrant.

**American White Pelican:** The first was 1 on 22 Mar at L. Manawa (BPa). Peaks were all on 8 Apr: 665 at Rathbun Res. (RLC), 480 at Saylorville Res. (SJD, LPH), and 208 at L. Manawa (BPa, LPa). The only report from E Iowa was 35 on 11 Apr at Montrose (RIC). A flock of 85 on 24 May in Dallas Co. (RKM) was late for such a large number.

**Double-crested Cormorant:** The first were 2 on 24 Mar at Saylorville Res. (SJD). Peak was 665 on 20 Apr at Saylorville Res. (SJD).

**American Bittern:** The first was 1 on 15 Apr at Saylorville Res. (RKM, MPR); 6 on 12 May at Cone M. (THK, et al.) were the most reported. Another 11 reports of 1-3 birds are encouraging for this uncommon species.

**Least Bittern:** 2 were somewhat early on 7 May at Cone M. (THK, RIC).

**Great Blue Heron:** The colony at Saylorville Res. had an estimated 25 active nests this spring (RIC).

**Great Egret:** 1 was early on 24 Mar at Saylorville Res. (SJD, BE)[3rd earliest]. Also early was 1 on 25 Mar at Red Rock Res. (AJ). High counts were on 16 Apr: 22 at Saylorville Res. (PA, RA) and 17 at Union Sl. N.W.R. (MCK).

**Snowy Egret:** The only report was 2 on 18 Apr at L. Manawa (BPa details).

**Little Blue Heron:** 1 on 13 Apr at Big Creek S.P. (AJ), 2 ad. on 3 May below Saylorville Res. dam (MPR, BPR) and an ad. and a calico there on 4 May (SJD), and 1 on 21 May at Saylorville Res. (DETH) were the only reports.

**Tricolored Heron:** A report will be referred to the Records Committee.

**Cattle Egret:** 1 on 25 Apr s. of Pacific Jct. (DLR), 4 on 27 Apr at Myre Sl. (Ron Munkel fide JLH), 1 on 8 May at Big Creek S.P. (RKM), 1 on 14 May at Gull Point S.P. (JJ), and 1 on 17 May at Rush L., Palo Alto Co. (MMB) were the only reports received.

**Green-backed Heron:** Singles on 19 Apr at Ames (D. DeGeus fide SJD) and Union Sl. N.W.R. (MCK) were a bit early.

**Black-crowned Night-Heron:** Widely reported after mid-Apr with a high count of 13 on 29 Apr at Riverton A. (SJD, LPH).

**Yellow-crowned Night-Heron:** 9 reports this spring, all of single birds; 1 on 6 May in NW Palo Alto Co. (Phil Delphay, Lisa Hemesath fide JJD) was outside this species' normal range in Iowa.

**Tundra Swan:** 4 of the birds wintering n. of Le Claire were last seen on 1 Mar (PCP). The only other reports were 150 on 24 Mar n. of Lansing (MJH), 2 on 24-27 Mar at Lakin Sl. (SJD, RKM), 1 on 26 Mar at Ames (M. Meetz fide SJD), and 2 late birds on 1 May at Lakin Sl. (R. Sedlacek fide SJD).

**Mute Swan:** 2 on 11 Mar at IPL Ponds were thought to have come from the Glenwood City Park (TB, BLW).

**Greater White-fronted Goose:** This species was widely reported from C and E Iowa. The peak was 850 on 16 Mar at Riverton A. (SJD, LPH). The last were 5 on 24 May at Spirit L. (J. Synhorst fide DCH).



**Snow Goose:** The high count was 20,000 on 16 Mar at Riverton A. (SJD, LPH). Away from W Iowa, 800 on 26 Mar at Hendrickson M. (MPR, BPr) was the most reported.

**Ross' Goose:** There were few reports this spring: 1 on 9 Mar (SJD, JJD, LPH) and 2 on 19 Apr (AJ) at Bays Branch, 1 on 25 Mar and 2 on 13 Apr at Saylorville Res. (SJD), and 2 on 30 Mar at Big Creek S.P. (SJD) were the only reports away from W Iowa.

**Canada Goose:** High counts were 4,100 on 10 Mar at Red Rock Res. (SJD), 1,540 on 11 Mar at Rathbun Res. (RLC), and 3,000 on 15 Mar at Clear L. (JLH). An albino was at Saylorville Res. on 25 Mar (SJD, BE).

**American Black Duck:** 4 reports from C and SW Iowa, all in March and April.

**Northern Pintail:** 3,000 on 16 Mar at Riverton A. (SJD, LPH) were impressive. Few others were reported. A nest was at Ventura M. on 14 May (JLH).

**Blue-winged Teal:** The first was 1 on 10 Mar below Red Rock Res. dam (SJD).

**Cinnamon Teal:** A banner spring for this species with 4 males reported: 1 on 6 Apr-8 May at Cone M. (\*PCP, \*JLF, m.ob.), 1 on 13-20 Apr at Big Creek S.P. (AJ, m.ob.), 1 on 29 Apr at Riverton A. (SJD, LPH), and 1 on 19-21 May at Lylah's M. (MJH, details)[record latest]. Females were reported with some of these, but no convincing details were given.

**Canvasback:** High counts were 4,000 on 12 Mar at Pool 19 (RIC) and 200 on 21 Apr at L. Manawa (BP, LPA).

**Greater Scaup:** Many reports were received, all with details. First was 1 on 8 Mar at Red Rock Res. (AJ). Peak was 100 on 19 Mar at Pool 13 (PCP), and last was 1 female on 19 May at New L. (SJD)[3rd latest].

**Lesser Scaup:** High count was 4,000 on 12 Mar at Pool 19 (RIC).

**Oldsquaw:** 2 on 11-16 Mar at IPL Ponds (BP, LPA, m.ob.), 1 on 15 Mar at Saylorville Res. (SJD), and 1 on 30 Apr, 1 May at Badger Creek L. (PA, m.ob.)(2nd latest).

**Black Scoter:** 1 male on 8-9 Apr at Saylorville Res. (BE, \*ASF photo, \*AJ photo) and 1 imm. male on 11-19 May at IPL Ponds (SJD details, \*BP/LPA) are only the 2nd and 3rd spring reports for Iowa.

**Surf Scoter:** The only report was 1 imm. male on 11-19 May at IPL Ponds (SJD details)(ties 2nd latest).

**White-winged Scoter:** The only report was 1 imm. male and 1 female on 13 Apr-1 May at Big Creek S.P. (SJD details)(3rd latest).

**Common Goldeneye:** Last was 1 on 29 Apr at Big Creek S.P. (SJD, LPH).

**Bufflehead:** 4 on 13 May at IPL Ponds (BP, LPA) were the last.

**Hooded Merganser:** 57 on 19 Mar at Saylorville Res. (SJD) were the most reported. A brood was at Otter Creek M. on 21 May (MPR, BPr).

**Common Merganser:** Peak was 1,800 on 18 Mar at Saylorville Res. (SJD). A male lingered through the end of the period at Lakin Sl. (RKM, SJD).

**Red-breasted Merganser:** High counts were 193 on 2 Apr at Saylorville Res. (SJD, LPH) and 267 on 11 Apr at Pool 19 (RIC). The last of several late May reports was 1 on 28 May at Ventura M. (SJD).

**Turkey Vulture:** First were 1 on 10 Mar near Runnells (SJD) and 1 on 11 Mar in Lee Co. (RIC). Nests were found in Allamakee Co. (DJC), in Guthrie Co. (R. Sedlacek fide SJD), and near Sidney (Carl Priebe fide BLW).

**Osprey:** First was 1 on 1 Apr in Lee Co. (RIC). High count was 3 on 23 Apr at Big Creek S.P. (ASF).

**Bald Eagle:** Peaks were 141 (63 ad., 78 imm.) on 10 Mar at Red Rock Res. (SJD), 82 (36 ad., 46 imm.) on 19 Mar at Saylorville Res. (SJD), and 167 (92 ad., 75 imm.) on 21 Mar at L. Manawa (BP). There were 7 active nests in Iowa this spring (LSJ, DHO).

**Northern Harrier:** Up to 6 lingered until 10 May at Coralville Res. (THK, JLF).

**Sharp-shinned Hawk:** Peak was 4 on 9 May at Union Sl. N.W.R. (MCK).

**Cooper's Hawk:** At least 9 nests were found in Iowa this spring (DJC).

**Northern Goshawk:** 1 ad. on 25 Mar at Saylorville Res. (SJD, BE) was the only report.

**Red-shouldered Hawk:** 8 nests were found in Iowa this spring (LSJ, DHO).

**Broad-winged Hawk:** 1 on 15 Apr at Fairfield (DCP) was a bit early. A good flight occurred across the state on 22-24 Apr with high counts of 170 on 23 Apr at Ames (PWM) and 200 on 24 Apr at Algona (MCK).



*Black Scoter, Saylorville Res., 9 Apr 1989.  
Photo by Andrew S. Fix*



**Swainson's Hawk:** There were many reports of 1-2 birds including nests in Osceola Co. (DBi, 12th straight year at this location) and at George Wyth S.P. (THK, et al.).

**Red-tailed Hawk:** A Krider's form was reported on 14 Apr in Page Co. (BLW details).

**Ferruginous Hawk:** A report will be referred to the Records Committee.

**Golden Eagle:** 1 imm. on 14 Apr w. of Union (\*MPR) was the only report.

**American Kestrel:** High counts were 55 on 26 Mar in C Iowa (SJD, LPH), 27 on 31 Mar in Hardin and Marshall counties (MPR), and 22 on 7 Apr in NC Iowa (JLW, CN).

**Merlin:** 8 reports of single birds, most in late April.

**Peregrine Falcon:** 1 on 22 Apr was at Coralville Res. (JLF), and singles on 2, 9 May were at Union St. N.W.R. (MCK).

**Prairie Falcon:** The bird e. of Reinbeck was last reported on 1 Mar (\*AJ).

**Gray Partridge:** This species continues to spread south with reports from Keokuk, Mills, and Warren counties.

**Yellow Rail:** Singles were at Ventura M. on 3 May (JLH details), at Cone M. on 7 May (\*JLF), and at Sweet M. on 20 May (RKM details).

**Black Rail:** A report will be referred to the Records Committee.

**King Rail:** Reports were of up to 2 from 29 Apr-12 May at Cone M. (PCP, m.ob.), 1 on 6, 8 May at Snake Creek M. (RKM), and 2 on 20 May at Princeton M. (RLC, m.ob.).

**Virginia Rail:** The first were 2 on 29 Apr at Otter Creek M. (JLF).

**Sora:** A nest was found on 28 May at the Russ W.A., Winnebago Co. (SJD).

**Common Moorhen:** First was 1 on 29 Apr at Cone M. (THK). The most were 13 on 28 May at Big Wall L. (SJD). Up to 3 were reported from Jefferson, Polk, Scott, and Winnebago counties.

**Sandhill Crane:** Reports were of 1 imm. on 10 Mar at Saylorville Res. (SJD), 1 on 31 Mar at Willow Sl. (Carl Priebe fide BLW), 3 on 2 Apr n. of Des Moines (Larry Igl fide JJD), 5 or 6 on 22 Apr near New Albin (Kay Neumann fide JJD), 1 on 22 Apr at Otter Creek M. (JLF), 3 on 29 Apr s. of Hastings (RKM), 1 on 29 Apr at Riverton A. (RKM), 1 on 17 May at Ventura M. (JLH), and 1 on 21 May in Scott Co. (\*RJH).

**Black-bellied Plover:** There were few reports. First were 2 on 5 May near Plymouth (JLW, CN). The most were 13 on 27 May in Dallas Co. (RKM).

**Lesser Golden-Plover:** 1 was early on 26 Mar at Saylorville Res. (SJD, LPH). High counts were 200 on 16 May in NC Iowa (THK) and 100 on 17 May at Rush L., Osceola Co. (MMB).

**Semipalmated Plover:** The first were 2 on 9 Apr w. of Pacific Jct. (DLR)[2nd earliest]. The most were 8 on 18 May at Grover L. (DCH).

**Piping Plover:** In W Iowa, the first was 1 at IPL Ponds on 3 May (BP, LPa), peak was 4 there on 11 May (SJD), and 2 nests were found on 19 May (SJD). The only other W Iowa reports were 1-2 on 6, 9 May near Bartlett (DLR, RR, WRS) and 1 on 11 May at Riverton A. (SJD). Birds in C Iowa were 1 at Alden, Hardin Co., on 3 May (\*DBi), 1 on 3-8 May at Saylorville Res. (MPR, m.ob.), and 1 on 4 May at Big Creek S.P. (SJD).

**American Avocet:** There were few reports this spring. First and most were 40 on 18 Apr at L. Manawa (BP). Others were 2 on 3 May at Lylah's M. (MJH), 2 on 4 May at Saylorville Res. (SJD, RKM), and 1 on 11, 19 May at Riverton A. (SJD, WRS).

**Greater Yellowlegs:** First was 1 on 25 Mar at Bays Branch (EuA, EIA). The last was 1 on 28 May in Wright Co. (SJD).

**Lesser Yellowlegs:** 1 on 26 Mar at Union St. N.W.R. (MCK) was a little early; 800 on 29 Apr at Riverton A. (SJD, LPH) were the most reported. Few other reports were received.

**Solitary Sandpiper:** Peak was 66 on 29 Apr at Riverton A. (SJD, LPH). Late was 1 on 26 May at Union St. N.W.R. (MCK details)[2nd latest].

**Willet:** Many reports this spring, beginning with 1 on 3 Apr at Little Wall L. (JJD details)[ties 2nd earliest]. Most reports were from the last week in April with high counts of 15 on 21 Apr at Saylorville Res. (ASF), 25 on 24 Apr at Union Grove L. (MPR, BPR), and 16 on 26 Apr at Big Creek S.P. (SJD); 1 was a bit late on 27 May in Dallas Co. (RKM).

**Spotted Sandpiper:** 1 was early on 21 Apr at Pine L. (MPR).

**Upland Sandpiper:** High count was 8 on 15 May in NE Madison Co. (EuA, EIA). Others were reported from Cerro Gordo, Clay, Emmet, Iowa, Lucas, and Mills counties.

**Hudsonian Godwit:** First was 1 on 13 Apr in Palo Alto Co. (T. LaGrange fide JLH)[3rd earliest]. High count was 41 on 19 May at Riverton A. (SJD, WRS). Most other reports were of fewer than 10 birds.

**Marbled Godwit:** First were 2 on 7 Apr at Saylorville Res. (SJD details)[3rd earliest], 1 on 9 Apr w. of Pacific Jct. (DLR), and 2 on 10 Apr e. of Union (MPR details). Last were 2 on 15 May at Dunbar Sl. (JSi, AJ). E Iowa reports were 4 on 6 May in Lee Co. (THK details, RIC) and 2 on 8 May ne of Muscatine (PCP details).

**Ruddy Turnstone:** Reports were of 1 on 13 May at Little Wall L. (MPR, BPR), 1 on 14 May at Saylorville Res. (PA, m.ob.), 2 on 18 May at Union Sl. N.W.R. (MCK), 1 on 19 May at Swan L., Johnson Co. (THK), 1 on 19 May at Riverton A. (SJD, WRS), 2 on 26 May at IPL Ponds (BPA, LPA), and 20 on 28 May at Greenfield L. (B. Ballard fide SJD).

**Sanderling:** There were very few reports this spring. First was 1 on 29 Apr at Saylorville Res. (SJD, LPH). High count was 4 on 26 May at Saylorville Res. (SJD, BE).

**Semipalmated Sandpiper:** 1 was early on 16, 20 Apr at Big Creek S.P. (SJD, LPH).

**Western Sandpiper:** Reports with details were 3 on 4 May below Saylorville Res. dam (SJD, RKM) and 3 on 28 May at Clear L. (SJD, JLH).

**White-rumped Sandpiper:** Early were 20 on 29 Apr at Riverton A. (SJD details, LPH)[3rd earliest]. High count was 2,000 on 19 May at Riverton A. (SJD, WRS).

**Baird's Sandpiper:** 2 were early on 16 Mar at Riverton A. (SJD, LPH details)[2nd earliest]. High count was 40 on 29 Apr at Riverton A. (SJD, LPH). Last were 2 on 20 May at Saylorville Res. (ASF).

**Pectoral Sandpiper:** High count was 700 on 29 Apr at Riverton A. (SJD, LPH).

**Dunlin:** 21 on 18 May at Union Sl. N.W.R. (MCK) was the most reported.

**Stilt Sandpiper:** High counts were 28 on 11 May at Riverton A. (SJD) and 18 on 18 May at Union Sl. N.W.R. (MCK).

**Short-billed Dowitcher:** 1 was early on 29 Apr at Riverton A. (SJD details, LPH). Many were reported in the first half of May with a high count of 31 on 19 May at Riverton A. (SJD, WRS). Most reports gave details.

**Long-billed Dowitcher:** First was 1 on 16 Apr n. of Clear L. (JLW, CN). High count was 27 on 29 Apr at Riverton A. (SJD, LPH). Last was 1 on 6 May below Saylorville Res. dam (PA, m.ob.). Again, most reports gave details.

**Common Snipe:** 75 on 29 Apr at Riverton A. (SJD, LPH) and 1 on 29 May at Zirbel Sl. (JLW) were the only ones reported.

**Wilson's Phalarope:** A good year for this species with high counts of 200 on 29 Apr at Riverton A. (SJD, LPH) and 100 on 5 May s. of Cherokee (MMB). A pair was courting on 21 May at Goose L., Clinton Co. (JJD). Last was 1 on 27 May at Swan L., Johnson Co. (JLF).

**Red-necked Phalarope:** The only report was 1 on 7 May at Runnell's W.A. (JSi).

**Franklin's Gull:** First was 1 on 21 Mar at L. Manawa (BPA). Peak was 130 on 4 May at Saylorville Res. (SJD).

**Bonaparte's Gull:** The first migrants appeared on 8-9 Apr statewide. High counts were 45 on 18 Apr at L. Manawa (BPA) and 59 on 20 Apr at Big Creek S.P. (SJD, LPH). An imm. was late at Saylorville Res. on 26 May (SJD, BE).

**Ring-billed Gull:** The largest concentrations were 5,000 on 12 Mar at Pool 19 (RIC), 3,000 on 22 Mar at L. Manawa (TB), and 4,000 on 25-31 Mar at Saylorville Res. (SJD).

**Herring Gull:** Late were 1 on 15 May at Sweet M. (THK, FLM, RT) and 1 on 20 May at Saylorville Res. (ASF).

**Glaucous Gull:** 1 on 2 Mar at Davenport (PCP), 1 on 11 Mar at Red Rock Res. (AJ), 1 1st-winter bird on 18 Mar at Saylorville Res. (SJD), and 1 1st-winter bird on 25 Mar at IPL Ponds (BLW) constituted an above normal number of reports for spring.

**Slaty-backed Gull:** A report will be referred to the Records Committee.

**Caspian Tern:** No details were given for an early report. The first was 1 on 23 Apr at Rathbun Res. (SJD). An impressive 280 on 8 May at Clear L. (JLH, DBi) are the most ever reported for spring. Other high counts were 56 on 11 May at Saylorville Res. (SJD), 20 on 13 May at IPL Ponds (BPA, LPA), and 40 on 21 May near Credit I. (PCP).

**Common Tern:** The first were 2 on 3-4 May below Saylorville Res. dam (MPR, BPR, m.ob.). High count was 8 on 10 May at Saylorville Res. (SJD). Last was 1 on 29 May at Little Wall L. (SJD). All reports gave details.

**Forster's Tern:** The first were 5 on 15 Apr in Appanoose Co. (RLC); 100 on 6 May at Keokuk (THK, RIC) were the most reported; 25 ad. and 5 nests were at Ventura M. on 22 May (JLH).

**Least Tern:** Up to 4 were reported at IPL Ponds after 7 May (DLR, m.ob.).

**Black Tern:** 1 was early on 29 Apr at Montrose (RIC)[ties 2nd earliest]. High counts were 100 on 14 May at Union Sl. N.W.R. (MCK), 200 on 26 May at Saylorville Res. (SJD, BE), and 350 on 28 May at Ventura M. (SJD).

**Black-billed Cuckoo:** 1 was very early on 23 Apr in Warren Co. (\*AJ)[record earliest]; 1 was also early on 8 May at Grammar Grove (MPR, BPR, PH).

**Common Barn-Owl:** The only report was 1 on 13 Mar w. of Tabor (WRS details).

**Snowy Owl:** 1 on 20 Mar near Britt (L. Washburn fide JLH) was the only report.

**Long-eared Owl:** Somewhat late were 1 on 16 Apr in Des Moines (RIC, FLM) and 1 through 20 Apr at Coralville Res. (JLF).



**Short-eared Owl:** High counts were 6 on 12 Mar at Bays Branch (SJD, ASF) and up to 6 through 12 May at Coralville Res. (JLF, THK).

**Northern Saw-whet Owl:** 10 birds were reported with the last on 1 Apr at Coralville Res. (JLF).

**Common Nighthawk:** The first were 4 on 25 Apr in Des Moines (DETh)[2nd earliest].

**Chuck-will's-widow:** 2 on 11 May n. of Waubonsie S.P. (SJD) was the only report.

**Whip-poor-will:** 1 was a bit early on 21 Apr at Lacey-Keosauqua S.P. (DCP). Few others were reported.

**Chimney Swift:** Very early were 2 on 8 Apr at Pella (T. Rosburg fide SJD)[record earliest].

**Ruby-throated Hummingbird:** Early was 1 on 30 Apr n. of Iowa City (JLF).

**Pileated Woodpecker:** Up to 2 in April and May in the Des Moines area (PA, RA, m.ob.), 1 on 22 Apr at Iowa River woods, Marshall Co. (MPR, BPR), 1 on 23 Apr in Marshalltown (B. Savage fide MPR), 1 on 13, 19 May at Grammar Grove (MPR, BPR), and a pair and a nest on 28 May at Idlewild W.A., Floyd Co. (JLW) were all away from this species' usual haunts in Iowa.

**Olive-sided Flycatcher:** 1 was early on 6 May at Ledges S.P. (MPR, BPR). High count was 3 on 24 May in Boone and Webster counties (MPR, BPR).

**Yellow-bellied Flycatcher:** Many were reported in late May with high counts of 3 on 24 May at Holst F. (MPR, BPR) and 5 on 29 May in Winnebago Co. (SJD).

**Acadian Flycatcher:** Several were reported from E and C Iowa, but the most reported was 4 on 29 May at Waubonsie S.P. (WRS).

**Alder Flycatcher:** A banner year for this species with a large movement through C Iowa noted on 25-27 May (BPR, SJD). High counts were 8 on 21 May at George Wyth S.P. (RKM), 3 on 25 May at Waubonsie S.P. (TB, BPA), 14 on 26 May at Squirrel Hollow P., Greene Co. (SJD), and 12 on 27 May at Backbone S.P. (ASF).

**Least Flycatcher:** Early were 1 on 27 Apr at Ledges S.P. (SJD)[ties 2nd earliest], 1 on 28 Apr at Ames (ASF), and 1 on 29 Apr at Iowa City (THK). Peak was 13 on 8 May at Ames (ASF).

**Eastern Phoebe:** The first was 1 on 24 Mar at Fairfield (DCP).

**Great Crested Flycatcher:** 1 was very early on 21 Apr in Hardin Co. (DJC details)[record earliest]. Also early were 1 on 27 Apr in Shimek F. (RIC) and 2 on 29 Apr at Ledges S.P. (SJD, LPH).

**Western Kingbird:** In W Iowa, the first were 1 on 11 May at IPL Ponds (SJD) and 2 on 12 May at Sioux City (JJ). High count was 7 on 19 May in Fremont Co. (SJD). Away from W Iowa, 1 on 15 May in Greene Co. (\*JSi) and 2 on 27 May e. of Des Moines (JLF) were more unusual.

**Eastern Kingbird:** First was 1 on 24 Apr at Fairfield (DCP).

**Scissor-tailed Flycatcher:** The only report was 1 on 25 Apr at Kettleson Hogsback W.A. (T. Waltz, J. Drahota, G. Wee fide DCH).

**Purple Martin:** 1 was early on 23 Mar at Pony Creek, Mills Co. (DLR, RR)[ties 2nd earliest].

**Tree Swallow:** 2 were early on 18 Mar at Princeton M. (PCP)[ties 2nd earliest].

**Red-breasted Nuthatch:** The only reports were 1 on 6 May at L. Hendrick's, Howard Co. (MJH) and 1 on 9 May at Huron I. (PCP).

**Brown Creeper:** 2 on 4, 6 May in Des Moines (PA, RA), 3 territorial birds on 8 May at Credit I. (PCP), 5 territorial birds on 9 May at Huron I. (PCP), and 1 on 11 May s. of Bellevue (PCP) are more May reports than usual and could indicate nesting.

**Carolina Wren:** This species continues to recover from low numbers in the early 1980s; 1-4 birds were reported from 15 locations, most in C and E Iowa.

**Winter Wren:** 5 were reported between 19 Mar and 26 Apr, about typical for spring.

**Marsh Wren:** 1 was very early on 15 Apr at the Polk City W.A. (RKM details, MPR)[record earliest].

**Golden-crowned Kinglet:** 3 were somewhat late on 28 Apr at Algona (MCK).

**Ruby-crowned Kinglet:** High count was 42 on 15 Apr at Dolliver S.P. (ASF); 1 was late on 27 May in Warren Co. (AJ)[2nd latest].

**Blue-gray Gnatcatcher:** 1 was a bit early on 15 Apr at Dolliver S.P. (ASF).

**Mountain Bluebird:** Up to 8 on 7-24 Mar at Lake Anita S.P. (\*RKM, \*SJD, \*AJ, \*JLF) probably wintered in the area and may have been a family group. Another male was reported on 19 Mar n. of Emmetsburg, Palo Alto Co. (\*ET). These are the 6th and 7th state records.

**Veery:** 8 on 27 May at Backbone S.P. (ASF) were the most reported.

**Gray-cheeked Thrush:** 1 was early on 30 Apr at Ames (ASF). Peak was 3 on 8 May in Appanoose Co. (RLC). Several were reported in early May.

**Swainson's Thrush:** Early were 1 on 24 Apr at Davenport (PCP), 1 on 26 Apr at Ames (ASF), and 1 on 27 Apr at Sioux Center (JV). Peaks were rather late this year; 9 on 27 May at Ames (PWM) and 9 on 29 May near Adel (RIC).

**Hermit Thrush:** 1 was at Algona on 26 Mar (MCK). Peak was 8 on 19 Apr at Ames (SJD).

**Wood Thrush:** 1 was at Happy Hollow, Dallas Co., on 23 Apr (RKM)[2nd earliest]. Also early was 1 on 27 Apr at Shimek F. (RIC).

**American Robin:** A partially albino individual was reported from Glenwood in Apr-May (DLR).

**Varied Thrush:** Wintering birds lingered through 20 Mar at Waukon (TR) and 21 Apr in Des Moines (J. Enyart fide JLF)[2nd latest].

**Gray Catbird:** 1 on 2 Apr at Iowa City (J. Hollis fide RJH) may have been wintering. Early were 2 on 25 Apr at Iowa City (JLF).

**Northern Mockingbird:** 1-3 were reported from 12 locations, all in the southern half of the state. The northern most report was 1 on 10 Apr, 1 May in Boone Co. (SRL).

**Brown Thrasher:** 1 on 26 Mar at Fairfield (DCP) could have been an early migrant or a wintering bird.

**Water Pipit:** There were few reports. The first were 2 on 16 Mar at Riverton A. (SJD, LPH) and 24 were there on 29 Apr (SJD, LPH). Other reports were 4 on 1 Apr at Coralville Res. (JLF), 6 on 6 Apr w. of Conesville (PCP), and 1 on 21 Apr at Lacey-Keosauqua S.P. (DCP).

**Northern Shrike:** 5 were reported with details, the last on 24 Mar n. of Cardinal M. (MJH).

**White-eyed Vireo:** 1-2 birds were reported from 7 locations, beginning with 1 on 28 Apr at Shimek F. (RIC).

**Bell's Vireo:** The first was 1 on 10 May at Fairfield (DCP).

**Solitary Vireo:** The first was 1 on 22 Apr in Warren Co. (AJ)[2nd earliest]. Also early was 1 on 26 Apr at Ames (LPH). Peak was 12 on 9 May at Ames (ASF).

**Yellow-throated Vireo:** Early were 1 on 22 Apr at Lacey-Keosauqua S.P. (DCP)[ties record earliest], 1 on 23 Apr near Vincennes, Lee Co. (SJD)[3rd earliest], and 1 on 24 Apr at Algona (MCK).

**Warbling Vireo:** The first was 1 on 23 Apr in SW Lee Co. (SJD)[ties record earliest].

**Red-eyed Vireo:** Early were 1 on 27 Apr at Ledges S.P. (SJD)[ties 2nd earliest], 1 on 29 Apr at Shimek F. (RIC), 1 on 29 Apr at Lacey-Keosauqua S.P. (DCP), and 1 on 30 Apr w. of Cone M. (THK).

**Blue-winged Warbler:** High count was 12 on 28 Apr at Shimek F. (RIC). Singles at Algona on 10 May (MCK) and Cherokee County P. on 20 May (DBi) were outside this species' normal range in Iowa.

**Golden-winged Warbler:** Many were reported this spring from across the state. The first were 2 on 28 Apr at Ames (ASF) and 2 on 28 Apr at Shimek F. (RIC)[record earliest]. Peak was 4 on 9, 10 May at Ames (ASF, SJD). The last was 1 on 27 May near Dorchester (MJH)[2nd latest].

**Brewster's Warbler:** A hybrid Blue-winged/Golden-winged Warbler was reported on 11 May in Warren Co. (\*AJ).

**Tennessee Warbler:** The first was 1 on 23 Apr in Lee Co. (SJD)[3rd earliest].

**Orange-crowned Warbler:** There were many reports from late April, the first on 21 Apr at Pony Creek, Mills Co. (DLR).

**Nashville Warbler:** The first were 1 on 24 Apr at A.A. Call S.P. (MCK) and 1 on 24 Apr at Rolling Thunder Prairie, Warren Co. (JSi). Peak was 21 on 9 May at Ames (ASF).

**Yellow Warbler:** Early were singles on 26 Apr at Saylorsville Res. and Big Creek S.P. (SJD)[ties 3rd earliest].

**Chestnut-sided Warbler:** A pair on 24 May in Holst F. (MPR, BPR) acted like they were nesting.

**Cape May Warbler:** An unstated number on 5 May at Wexford (FL) and 2 on 14 May at Holst F. (RKM) were the only reports.

**Black-throated Blue Warbler:** A male was reported on 10 May at Lake Ahquabi S.P. (AJ).

**Yellow-rumped Warbler:** Peak was 75 on 6 May at Ames (PWM).

**Black-throated Green Warbler:** Peak was 6 on 10 May at Grammar Grove (MPR, BPR).

**Blackburnian Warbler:** The first were 1 on 28 Apr at Ames (G. Brown fide SJD), 1 on 29 Apr at Ledges S.P. (SJD, PH), and 1 on 30 Apr w. of Cone M. (THK). Peak was 7 on 13 May at Ames (PWM).

**Yellow-throated Warbler:** Birds were reported from the usual locations along the Des Moines R. in SE and C Iowa. At least 4 males were at Ledges S.P. in May (SJD).

**Pine Warbler:** Reports with details included singles on 25 Apr [ties 2nd earliest] and 8 May at Wildcat Den S.P. (PCP, BLB, DWM) and 1 on 5 May in NW Scott Co. (PCP).

**Prairie Warbler:** The only report was 1 male on 30 May in Yellow River F. (SJD details).

**Palm Warbler:** Singles on 21 Apr [ties 3rd earliest] were at Lacey-Keosauqua S.P. (DCP details) and Jester Park (AJ). High count was 5 on 4 May at A. A. Call S.P. (MCK).

**Bay-breasted Warbler:** The first were seen on 28 Apr [2nd earliest]: 1 at Ames (G. Brown fide SJD) and 2 at Shimek F. (RIC). Few others were reported.

**Blackpoll Warbler:** The peak was 4 on 27 May at Backbone S.P. (ASF). Last was 1 on 29 May at Harmon L. (SJD, JLF).



**Black-and-white Warbler:** The first was 1 on 22 Apr at Jester Park (SJD).

**Prothonotary Warbler:** Many were reported, beginning with 1 on 29 Apr w. of Cone M. (THK)[3rd earliest]. High count was 8 on 31 May s. of Guttenberg (SJD). More unusual were 3 on 6 May at Riverton A. (DLR, RR), 1 on 24 May at Marble Beach, Dickinson Co. (MMB), a pair and a nest on 28 May along the Little Sioux R. in O'Brien Co. (HWW), and 1 on 29 May at Harmon L. (SJD, JLH).

**Worm-eating Warbler:** 2 on 28 Apr (RIC) and 1 on 19 May (JLF) at Shimek F., 1 on 12 May at Lacey-Keosauqua S.P. (DCP), 1 on 15 May at Ledges S.P. (JSi, AJ), and 1 on 20 May at Sweet M., a "first at this location" (RKM) were all the reports.

**Northern Waterthrush:** The first was 1 on 24 Apr at Sioux Center (JV).

**Kentucky Warbler:** Many were reported, beginning with 2 on 28 Apr at Shimek F. (RIC). Most were in SE and C Iowa, but 1 on 6 May s. of Thurman (DLR, RR), 1 on 19 May at Hacklebarney Woods, Montgomery Co. (TB, BLW), and 1 on 29 May at Waubonsie S.P. (WRS) were in SW Iowa.

**Connecticut Warbler:** The only one of three reports that gave details was 1 on 20 May at Ledges S.P. (ASF).

**Mourning Warbler:** The first was 1 on 7 May at Ames (ASF)[ties 3rd earliest]. High count was 9 on 15 May at Ledges S.P. (JSi, AJ).

**Common Yellowthroat:** The first was 1 on 26 Apr at Fairfield (DCP).

**Hooded Warbler:** The only report was 1 on 30 May at Yellow River F. (SJD).

**Wilson's Warbler:** Singles on 27 May in Warren Co. (AJ) and 29 May at Harmon L. (SJD, JLH)[ties 3rd latest] were a bit late.

**Canada Warbler:** Many were reported after 9 May with a peak of 3 on 22 May at Ames (ASF).

**Yellow-breasted Chat:** The three reports were 1 on 28 Apr at Shimek F. (RIC)[record earliest], 1 on 12 May at Cone M. singing at night (THK, CJB, FLM), and 1 on 19 May near Perry (RKM).

**Summer Tanager:** 1 on 4, 5 May at Mason City (\*CN, JLW), 1 on 6 May at Brenton Sl. (PA, RA), 1 on 14 May at Lacey-Keosauqua S.P. (BPa, LPa), and 2 on 29 May at Manti Woods, Fremont Co. (WRS) were all the reports.

**Scarlet Tanager:** 1 was building a nest on 19 May at Hacklebarney Woods, Montgomery Co. (BLW).

**Rose-breasted Grosbeak:** The first was 1 on 22 Apr at Lacey-Keosauqua S.P. (DCP details)[2nd earliest].

**Blue Grosbeak:** The first was 1 on 11 May at Riverton A. (SJD). More unusual was 1 on 21 May in Van Buren Co. (J. Hamilton fide DCP).

**Indigo Bunting:** The first was 1 on 30 Apr at Jester Park (PA, RA).

**Clay-colored Sparrow:** Many were reported, most from early May. The first and most were 12 on 27 Apr at Otter Creek M. (JLF); 1 was somewhat late on 19 May at Weise Sl. (PCP).

**Baird's Sparrow:** A report will be referred to the Records Committee.

**Le Conte's Sparrow:** 8 on 15 Apr at Coralville Res. (AJ), 1 on 27 Apr at Otter Creek M. (JLF), and 1 on 30 Apr at Cone M. (THK) were the only reports.

**Sharp-tailed Sparrow:** The only report was 1-2 on 21, 22, 25 May at Snake Creek M. (DETH, RKM details, SJD details).

**Lincoln's Sparrow:** 1 was in West Des Moines on 26 Mar (\*EuA/EIA) and on 15 Apr (\*RA).

**White-throated Sparrow:** 1 was late on 27 May at Centerville (RLC).

**White-crowned Sparrow:** Most reports were from the first half of May with the last 1 on 14 May at Fairfield (DCP).

**Harris' Sparrow:** As with the previous species, most reports were from the first half of May. The last was 1 on 19 May in Fremont Co. (SJD).

**Dark-eyed Junco:** Many reports were 1 on 3 May in Warren Co. (AJ), 1 on 9 May at Union Sl. N.W.R. (MCK), and 1 on 14 May in Cass Co. (MAP).

**Lapland Longspur:** 5,000 on 17 Mar e. of Ames (SJD) and 3,000 in 6 flocks on 19 Mar in W Sioux Co. (JV) were the most reported.

**Smith's Longspur:** Up to 300 were reported on 1-7 Apr in the same field as previous years e. of Cone M. (JLF, m.ob.).

**Snow Bunting:** The only reports were 5 on 4 Mar near Grimes (PA, RA), 6 on 5 Mar in Hamilton Co. (MJH), and 2 on 7 Mar near Burt (MCK).

**Yellow-headed Blackbird:** The first were 2 on 11 Apr at Union Sl. N.W.R. (MCK).

**Rusty Blackbird:** 240 on 12 Mar at Union Sl. N.W.R. (MCK) was the most reported.

**Brewer's Blackbird:** 2 on 18 Mar at Hendrickson M. (LPH details) and 1 on 26 Mar at Bays Branch (SJD details) were the only reports.

**Great-tailed Grackle:** A male on 12 May at Lamoni (\*JDG) and another male on 25 May at Lakin Sl. (SJD details) were the only reports.

**Orchard Oriole:** The first was 1 on 27 Apr at Big Creek S.P. (B. Ballard fide SJD)[ties 2nd earliest].

**Northern Oriole:** The first was 1 on 23 Apr at Lacey-Keosauqua S.P. (SJD)[ties 2nd earliest]. Many others were reported in late April.

**Pine Grosbeak:** A pair on 27-28 Mar at Decorah (\*DR/AR)[record latest] is an unusual spring record.

**Purple Finch:** The last was 1 on 8 May near Princeton (PCP).

**House Finch:** This species was everywhere this spring with reports from 16 counties statewide. Nesting was reported from Cerro Gordo, Kossuth, Story, and Warren counties. The first record for Sioux County was 4 at Sioux Center on 25 Mar (\*JV).

**Pine Siskin:** The only reports were 1 on 14 Apr, 2 May at Ames (JJD), 1 on 27 Apr n. of Iowa City (JLF), and 1 on 30 Apr at Davenport (PCP).

## COMMENT

I thank all contributors for sending in their reports on time. This made my job easier. Most reporters included details of unusual sightings. Reports of rare birds that are out-of-season need to include details in order to be included in the report. For example, Peregrine Falcons from mid-April to early May probably do not need details because this is the peak migration interval; however, birds seen before or after this should be described.

Reports were received from observers living in all parts of the state except for noticeable gaps in northeast and northwest Iowa. Observers should report birds that they see, even though they may be common. For common birds, report early and late dates and peak numbers. For uncommon birds, report all sightings. Make a note drawing attention to birds that are common in the state, but rare in your area. Otherwise, they may get left out of the report.

I thank Jim Dinsmore who helped write this report.

## CONTRIBUTORS

\* = documentation only

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## OTHER OBSERVERS

Carl J. Bendorf, Brian L. Blevins, Bery Engebretsen, Phyllis Harris, Donald W. Moeller, Francis L. Moore, Roger Rose, and Richard Tetrault.



## NOTES

### PACIFIC LOON AT LAKE MANAWA

LOREN PADELFORD AND BABS PADELFORD

On 23 October 1988, we observed a Pacific Loon on the southwest corner of Lake Manawa, Pottawattamie County, in a cove east of Boy Scout Island. We observed the bird for almost two hours at 50 to 150 yards as the bird fed with Double-crested Cormorants back and forth over a 100 yard area about 15 yards from shore. The following description is a composite of documentations by Alan Grenon, Tanya Bray, and the authors. The bird was seen on one occasion by one observer as close as 50 feet. The first time the bird was seen on 23 October there was only a Pied-billed Grebe and a Double-crested Cormorant for size comparison. The loon was smaller than the cormorant and larger than the grebe. The following day the bird was seen in company with three Common Loons and on 27 October with one Common Loon. It was clearly smaller than the Common Loons with a slimmer, shorter bill, and more rounded head. Bill, eyes, and legs were dark. The webbed feet were placed at the rear of the body (seen when stretching). The thin, straight bill was held level. Belly, breast, throat, and cheeks were white with the white coming up to just below the eye. One observer noted that the white came up to and around at least the bottom third of the eye. Cap and hindneck were solid light-gray, paler than the back. A faint, pale-gray chinstrap was visible against the white throat. There was a dark gray vertical line down the side of the neck between the gray hindneck and the white throat. The back was dark gray to brownish-gray with some paler barring or crescents. The Pacific Loon spent most of its time floating on the lake or diving repeatedly, usually quite close to shore. Occasionally, it preened, flapped its wings, and rolled on its side. The Pacific Loon was last seen at Lake Manawa on 28 October.



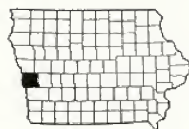
Red-throated Loon was eliminated by the three-toned neck markings, the chinstrap on the throat, and the straight bill without any apparent upward bevel. As mentioned earlier, the bird was seen with Common Loons on two occasions. Arctic Loon was eliminated based on range. The last sighting of Pacific Loon in Iowa was November 1986 when three individuals were documented at Saylorville Reservoir, Polk County (Dinsmore, S. 1987. Pacific Loons at Saylorville Reservoir. *Iowa Bird Life* 57:62).

1405 Little John Road, Bellevue, NE 68005.

## BRANT AT DE SOTO N.W.R.

W. ROSS SILCOCK

What appears to be Iowa's fourth confirmed report of Brant was reported on 12 December 1988 by a participant in the De Soto National Wildlife Refuge Christmas Bird Count in Harrison County. Subsequently, the Brant was seen by many observers, with an excellent photograph taken on 19 December by Doug Rose. Documentations were submitted by Steve Dinsmore (21 December and 3 January 1989), Robert Myers (22 December), Jim Fuller (23 December), Thomas Kent (23 December), Tanya Bray (2 January 1989), and Robert Cecil (2 January).



The descriptions noted that the bird was a small goose, smaller than a Snow Goose and not much larger than a Mallard. The head, neck, and breast were black, except for a white necklace on each side of the neck. Bill and eye were black, and the bill was described as stubby and much smaller than that of a Snow Goose. Upperparts were generally brownish, darkening towards the black wing tips, and rather plain, suggesting an adult because of the lack of noticeable pale feather margins. The bird had a white rump and tail, a dark terminal tail band about an inch wide, and a dark V on the upper tail coverts. Flanks, lower breast, and belly were light gray. The flanks had some light tan vertical barring. Legs were dark gray, with no band present.



Brant, De Soto N.W.R., 19 Dec 1988.

Photo by Doug Rose.

There was general agreement that this individual was an adult of the eastern race, *Branta bernicla hrota*. Of the three previous Iowa Brant records (Dinsmore, J.J. 1988. Brant at Red Rock Reservoir. *Iowa Bird Life* 58:24-25), two were *B. b. hrota* and the other was the western race, *B. b. nigricans*. Interestingly, one of the previous *B. b. hrota* records was from De Soto National Wildlife Refuge on 2 November 1980. The other records were also in fall: 4 October 1987 and 18 November 1982. All except the 1987 record were from extreme western Iowa. The 1987 record, possibly of a sick bird, was from Red Rock Reservoir.

Dinsmore (1988) suggests that Brant are probably regular in fall in states near the Great Lakes. The four Iowa records suggest that a few individuals pass through the state in fall, best looked for at goose concentration points. Dinsmore et al. (*Iowa Birds* 1984) discuss the likelihood that birds of either race may appear in Iowa, and suggest that the eastern race may be more likely based on nesting range and migration patterns.

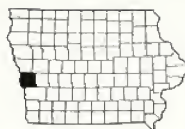
Box 300, Tabor, IA 51653.



## BARROW'S GOLDENEYE AT DE SOTO N.W.R.

W. ROSS SILCOCK

A pair of Barrow's Goldeneye was reported at De Soto National Wildlife Refuge, Harrison County, by Ruth Green prior to the Christmas Bird Count held at that location on 12 December 1988 (Tanya Bray, personal communication). Although the birds were reported on the Christmas Bird Count, no documentation was submitted. In fact, documentation was not received until 2 January 1989, when Tanya Bray described a male at the same location. Subsequent documentations of the male were received from Steve Dinsmore (3 January) and Jim Fuller (6 January). Recognizable photographs submitted by Loren and Babs Padelford were taken 8 January. Interestingly, a female goldeneye appeared near the male in both photographs, and this female appears to me to be a female Barrow's Goldeneye (see below).



The male was described as having a dark head with a crescent-shaped white patch between the eye and bill. The white patch was considered to be like an inverted tear-drop. The forehead sloped abruptly upward from the short, stubby, black bill, the bill being smaller than those of adjacent male Common



*Male Barrow's Goldeneye with possible female, Mallards, and Common Goldeneye.*

*Photos by Babs Padelford and Loren Padelford.*

Goldeneyes. The steep slope of the forehead gave the head a peaked appearance. A blue-purple sheen was observed on the head. The back, wings, and tail on the swimming bird were black, except for a line of square white spots along each side in the wing coverts. The black extended to the waterline in the shoulder area, separating white areas of breast and belly. Much more black was seen on the upper half of the swimming bird than on adjacent male Common Goldeneyes.

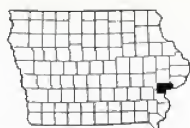
The female bird seen in the photographs appears to be a female Barrow's Goldeneye based on the steep slope of the forehead from the base of the short bill, giving this bird the same peak-headed appearance of the male. This is best shown in the photograph in which a male Mallard separates the goldeneye pair.

This is Iowa's second record of Barrow's Goldeneye—both from extreme western Iowa. The previous sighting was at Forney Lake in Fremont County from 17 March to 6 April 1984 (*Iowa Bird Life* 54:75-77).

## SHARP-TAILED SANDPIPER AT DAVENPORT

PETER C. PETERSEN

On the afternoon of 30 September 1988, Brian Blevins and I were returning to Davenport from Saylorville Reservoir where we had observed and photographed a Pomarine Jaeger. We decided to check the mud flat at the Credit Island Harbor, which, due to low water, extended to South Concord Street near its junction with West River Drive. We were, therefore, on South Concord across the harbor from Credit Island rather than on the island when we saw a small flock of eight medium sized shorebirds that we passed off as Pectoral Sandpipers. While we searched for other shorebirds with the sun behind us, this flock flew closer to our position, landing about 50 meters away. I rechecked the group with a tripod mounted scope at a 25X setting. I noticed one of the birds seemed a bit smaller than the rest and had an especially rusty cap. Brian agreed it was not a pectoral, and I mentioned the only Sharp-tailed Sandpiper record for Iowa was about this time of the year. It was, in fact, 3 October 1974, at Coralville Reservoir (Halmi 1974). Brian also called my attention to the white eyebrow as we increased power to 40X. We checked our field guide (National Geographic Society 1983) and confirmed all these points as indicating a Sharp-tailed Sandpiper.



I described the bird in my documentation as "Medium-sized shorebird closely resembling Pectoral Sandpiper" but "slightly smaller", "top of head rich brown to rufous", "breast with a tan wash, almost buff, a few streaks of brown at top of breast and along sides", "cheek buff, noticeably white eyebrow which broadened behind eye". In comparing the bird with the Pectoral Sandpipers I noted, "Pectorals had streaking across buff breast wash uniformly to lower edge of buff" and "back of Sharp-tailed seemed more uniform rich brown than those of the Pectorals." We made our notes independently, mine being done as soon as I reached home, within 30 minutes of observation. I consulted the Master Guide (Farrand 1983), Cramp (1983), and Hayman, Marchant, and Prater (1986) prior to completing my documentation.

The Sharp-tailed Sandpiper has been observed twice in Illinois, the first record coming from Chautauqua N.W.R. near Havanna, about 100 miles from Davenport, on 28 and 29 September 1974 (*Illinois Audubon Bulletin* 172:4-5) and 6 October 1985 at Chicago (*American Birds* 40:120). Another lingered from 6 to 23 October 1984 near Cleveland, Ohio (*American Birds* 39:60). The first record for Indiana occurred on 23 September to 6 October in Gibson



County where it was photographed (*American Birds* 43:111, *Indiana Audubon Quarterly* 67:62, 65). It has been seen in these eastern states: Alabama, Connecticut, Florida, Massachusetts, New Jersey, and New York as well as twice in Ontario. An excellent article paper on the identification of the Sharp-tailed Sandpiper appeared in *British Birds* (Britton 1980).

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Hayman, R., J. Marchant, and T. Prater. 1986. *Shorebirds*. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Co.

235 McClellan Blvd., Davenport, Iowa 52803

## BARN SWALLOWS ACCEPT NEST SUBSTITUTE

BARBARA L. WILSON

When I entered our barn on 2 July 1988 to check Barn Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*) nests, I noticed a couple of adults flying about and calling more persistently than usual. Assuming they had simply learned to recognize me or my mirror as an apparent threat to their nest, I began checking nests on the floor joists beneath the hayloft and did not notice anything really unusual until the dog and I entered the central alleyway. Then the dog pounced on a bit of grayness. One nestling swallow, with feathers barely emerging from their sheaths, broke for the manger while its three siblings huddled in a depression on the dirt floor. I grabbed the dog (who fortunately had inherited an inhibited attack from generations of sheep-herding ancestors), caught the fleeing nestling, and returned it to its siblings. After I held my hands around the group a moment, they settled down to watch us alertly. Fragments of a broken nest lay nearby, probably dislodged the previous day when my husband loaded green locust boards into the hayloft to dry.



While the dog stared at the nestlings alertly indeed, I worried. The barn cats would eat them even if the dog did not, and with their nest fallen, they could not be returned where they came from. Hand raising baby swallows would be difficult, time-consuming, and probably unsuccessful. Feeding the swallows to the cats was a tempting alternative, but I decided to try to replace the nest instead. Although birds often abandon a nest that is disturbed during incubation, I knew that they sometimes form such strong bonds with their young that they can tolerate amazing changes. The Barn Swallows, apparently still trying to protect their grounded young, seemed like good candidates for nest substitution.

Putting the four young and some nest fragments in a bucket, I took them into the house. There I cut an 11 x 8.5 cm piece of wood and nailed a wooden

railing around it that was 1.5 cm high. (The railing was probably unnecessary, I now believe.) I nailed it to the floor joist about 20 cm from the original nest and laid a few nest fragments in a semicircle near the edge of the platform. When I put the young swallows inside the semicircle, they hunkered down and made no effort to jump off. When next checked on July 7, the young were still on the wooden platform, though most of the nest fragments had fallen off, and an accumulation of dropping on the ground beneath the platform attested to at least adequate health.

One egg had been in this nest when it was first checked June 5. There were four eggs on June 16 and 19. On July 2, the four young were found on the ground and placed on their platform. On July 7, they were on the artificial nest, and on July 10 just two well-feathered young were present. On July 13 the platform was empty, and I believe the young fledged successfully, probably on July 10.

On July 18 there was a shallow circle of wet mud on the platform, and by July 24 the circle had been floored with mud to make a nest that filled the platform. On July 29 two eggs were in the nest, but then apparently the nest was abandoned or the adults died since no more eggs were laid and the two present did not hatch during the next month.

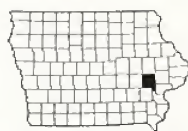
It was interesting to see that the parent Barn Swallows could adapt first to finding their young on the floor over a week before fledging time, and then to an unrealistic, man-made substitute nest.

*RR 1, Box 41, Hastings, IA 51540*

## WINTER OVENBIRD AT CORALVILLE

JOHN E. BUTLER

An Ovenbird was seen in my yard from 10 December 1988 to 10 January 1989. It spent most of the day beneath the various bird feeders and on the lower branches of nearby shrubs. The photos were taken shortly after New Years and shortly before an ice storm which ended the story of this bird in my yard. This is the only warbler I have seen in the wintertime, although I know such things have been reported.



*Ovenbird, Coralville, January 1989. Photos by John Butler.*

*712 11th Ave., Coralville, IA 52241*



# I. O. U. BUSINESS

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

Williamsburg, 18 February 1989, 10:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

ANN M. BARKER, SECRETARY

*Members present:* Jim Dinsmore (presiding), Eugene Armstrong, Ann Barker, Bob Cecil, Francis Moore, Jim Sinclair, and Carol Thompson.

*Minutes:* The Minutes for the meeting of 18 September were reviewed and approved (motion by Thompson, seconded by Brown).

### Reports

*Treasurer:* Moore distributed financial statements for 1988. Because most renewals came in after 1 January, that revenue is not reflected in the statement which shows a paper loss of \$3,000.00. Current revenues exceed \$5,000.00 and membership now stands at 429. Concern was expressed about the lack of correspondence with new members, specifically a welcome letter and newsletter. Dinsmore volunteered to put together a president's letter to send if Moore can supply him with names of new members. This will be done. Moore distributed a proposed budget for 1989. The Board suggested several changes. More information is needed on *Iowa Bird Life* expenses. Dinsmore will formalize the budget and will make recommendations and send a mail ballot to the Board. The possibility of a dues increase for 1990 will be considered in the spring.

*Publications Committee:* Dinsmore reported that the committee has not met since last spring. Steve Dinsmore has been appointed by editor Tom Kent to fill the position of spring field reports editor, replacing Bob Myers who has resigned. A motion was made to approve this appointment (Armstrong, seconded by Sinclair). The motion passed.

*Library/Historical:* Dinsmore reported that this committee has not met. The William Youngworth papers will be on deposit at the Iowa State University library.

*Membership Committee:* Moore indicated that the committee has not met; the brochure was reprinted last year. Sinclair inquired whether a membership list could be published. This issue has been previously discussed and the Board agreed that it should indeed be distributed. Moore will look into printing the list. Thompson will help Carl Bendorf and editor Tom Kent and insert it with an issue of *Iowa Bird Life*. The printing cost will come out of treasurer's expenses.

*Nominating Committee:* Dinsmore appointed Hank Zaletel, Pete Petersen, and Darwin Koenig to serve on the committee.

*Breeding Bird Atlas:* Thompson reported that the committee will meet on March 19th to consider outside funding sources. Although 1989 is scheduled to be the final year of the project, it is far from complete. Thompson estimated that the entire project is less than half done.

*Big Day Committee:* Dinsmore has not appointed a committee because of uncertainty on how to use the revenues. In the past, money generated by the project has gone into the endowment fund, for speakers and for projects.

*Education:* Linda Zaletel, Rick Hollis, Laura Jackson and Bernie Knight have developed a curriculum booklet on Iowa birds. A partial sample copy was distributed for the Board to review. General approval was expressed, and a motion was made (Thompson, seconded by Brown) to use Big Day revenues from 1988 and 1989 to fund the education project. The motion passed.

### Old Business

Moore indicated that in the process of printing the membership brochure and renewal notices, organizational information occasionally has not been updated. He would like some sort of a master copy of this information to be kept on file. The Board discussed potential solutions and none was found.

The Board discussed the bird list compilation which occurs at spring and fall meetings. Consensus was that the list should reflect only what is seen at the meeting and on official field trips. The idea of having two leaders for each field trip was discussed. The Board feels that we need to be more aware of all levels of birders.

### New Business

*Future Meetings:* Spring 89: Details of the upcoming meeting in Davenport were discussed. Plans are progressing well. Fall 89: Harold White, Estherville, plans to coordinate the fall meeting. The consensus of the Board was to set a date in mid-September and look for one central lo-

cation for the meeting, such as a camp. Spring 1990: Dinsmore and Bendorf, our representatives to the planning committee for the tri-state meeting, recently wrote to Fred Leshner stating that they felt too many formal papers were planned for the meeting to the exclusion of material for the more novice birder. They also felt that the business meeting should be scheduled later, and that vending should be open to anyone.

Cecil stated that Jim Fuller has been doing an excellent job with the birdline, but desperately needs input. Often, few if any reports are received, and Fuller has been calling around the state himself to gather information. This will be discussed at the Spring General Business Meeting.

The Board will meet next at the spring meeting, probably Saturday noon.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

*Davenport, 20 May 1989, 12:00 to 12:30 p.m.*

ANN M. BARKER, SECRETARY

*Members present:* Jim Dinsmore (presiding) Eugene Armstrong, Ann Barker, Beth Brown, Bob Cecil, Francis Moore, and Carol Thompson.

*Minutes:* The minutes for the meeting of 18 February 1989 were approved as circulated (Motion by Armstrong, seconded by Thompson).

### *Reports*

*Treasurer:* Francis Moore discussed the 1989 budget. Because the total membership can now be more accurately estimated, and *Iowa Bird Life* has projected slightly reduced publication expenses, projected income should exceed expenses. It was moved (Thompson, seconded by Barker) to approve the budget for 1989. The motion passed.

### *Old Business*

The Board discussed the allocation of funds from Big Day contributions. Dinsmore clarified that the minutes from the Board meeting of 18 February 1989 were misleading in that they implied that a plan for allocation of these funds had not been developed. In fact, there is a plan.

### *New Business*

The Board considered the question of whether to raise dues for 1990. The just adopted budget projects that revenue from dues should cover expenses for the year and the Board felt there was no need to raise dues. A motion was made (Armstrong, seconded by Brown) to maintain the present dues structure through 1990. The motion passed.

The Fall 1989 meeting has been proposed for a Presbyterian camp on West Lake Okoboji. Harold White will be in charge. The Board discussed potential dates and concluded that September 16 was most desirable.

On a point of protocol, Dinsmore suggested that the Board was probably out of order in approving Steve Dinsmore as a member of the editorial staff of *Iowa Bird Life* at the last meeting. Actually, the appointment was made by the editor and should have been approved by the Publications Committee. It was moved (Moore, seconded by Cecil) to rescind the Board's approval to comply with the proper procedure. The motion passed with Armstrong abstaining.

## SPRING BUSINESS MEETING

*Davenport, 20 May 1989, 4:00 to 5:00 p.m.*

ANN M. BARKER, SECRETARY

*Presiding:* Jim Dinsmore, President

*Minutes:* It was moved (Carol Thompson, seconded by Beth Brown) to approve the Spring 1988 (Mason City) minutes as published in *Iowa Bird Life*. The motion passed. It was moved (Eugene Armstrong, seconded by Carol Thompson) to approve the Fall 1988 (Dayton) minutes as published in *Iowa Bird Life*. The motion passed.

### *Reports*

*Treasurer:* Francis Moore discussed the balance sheet for 1988. The year ended with 500 members (462 regular, 35 life, 3 honorary, plus 53 subscriptions). For 1989 the membership cur-



rently stands at 490. Total fund balance ending December 1988 was approximately \$16,000.00. Ray Cummins asked if this could be broken down into specific funds and was told that in the future it will be.

### Treasurer's Report--1988

Assets 31 Dec 1986		\$18,991.95
1987 Addition		\$-3,043.01
Assets 31 Dec 1987		\$15,948.94
Cash	3,761.19	
CDs	11,675.45	
Interest due	512.30	
Income 1987		\$3,947.17
Contributions	907.77	
Members	111.00	
Bird-a-thon	572.55	
Birdline	224.22	
Membership/Subscriptions	2,083.25	
First member	1,344.00	
Second member	56.00	
Third+ member	2.00	
Life memberships	437.50	
Subscriptions	243.75	
Sales—I. O. U. materials	234.48	
Interest	721.67	
Expenses 1987		\$6,990.18
Publications Committee	5,407.62	
Iowa Bird Life	4,500.00	
I.O.U. News	907.62	
Membership Committee	168.32	
Meetings/activities	20.25	
Treasurer	395.83	
Board of Directors	15.40	
Birdline	587.69	
Materials	298.30	
Other	96.77	

Records Committee: Dinsmore reported that the committee has been active. A complete report of its activity was published recently in *Iowa Bird Life*. There have been two changes in committee composition. Ray Cummins has been appointed to replace Bob Myers and Bob Cecil was appointed to replace Pete Petersen. The appointments have been approved by the Board. Dinsmore expressed appreciation to Bob and Pete for their service on the committee. This was followed by a round of applause.

Publications: There was no formal report. The newsletter has changed to an Apple Macintosh computer format for the last two issues. The editors as always need material from members.

Library/Historical: The committee has not met.

Membership: The committee has not met. Current membership, numbering 500 at the end of 1988, is as high as it has been in recent memory.

Education: Laura Jackson outlined what is to be published as a result of the committee's project to develop an elementary curriculum activities book. A sample cover was circulated. The remainder of the publication will be finished soon.

Big Day: Ray Cummins urged participants to hand in reports soon. There were more participants this year than in past years. Proceeds will be in the neighborhood of \$400 - \$500.

Breeding Bird Atlas: Carol Thompson had a display poster with statistics which members could peruse. Block coverage is increasing and a contest is being run with prizes in several categories. She urged participants to turn in atlas cards even if the block is not finished so that data may be compiled. Jim Hansen has a complete set of block maps which are available to anyone. He reminded those entering the contest to please specify the total number of confirmed species

in each block. John Fleckenstein reminded members of a natural history foray in June and encouraged participation.

#### *New Business*

Dinsmore reported that the Board had met earlier in the day and approved the final budget for 1989. At present, the organization is operating in the black. The Board also voted not to increase dues for 1990.

Dinsmore complimented Jim Fuller for his excellent job with the birdline and urged members to telephone in reports consistently.

The Fall 1989 meeting has been proposed for the Iowa Great Lakes Region with Harold White, Estherville, in charge. The planned location is a Presbyterian church camp near the Lakeside Lab on West Okoboji. It was moved (Rick Hollis, seconded by Eugene Armstrong) to accept the invitation from Harold White to have the meeting at West Okoboji. The motion passed. A date was discussed and it was concluded that the weekend of September 15-17 is most desirable. A few members preferred the weekend of September 22-24.

The Spring 1990 meeting, a tri-state meeting to be held at LaCrosse hosted by W.S.O. and M.O.U. in addition to I.O.U., is set for the third weekend in May. There may be 500 or more in attendance.

The nominating committee, consisting of Pete Petersen, Hank Zaletel, and Darwin Koenig, presented the following slate of officers and board members for consideration for election to office: President—Jim Dinsmore; Vice President—Bob Cecil; Board of Directors (two year terms)—Diane Porter, Jim Sinclair, and Carol Thompson. Dinsmore requested further nominations from the floor for the office of president. There were none. It was moved (Barb Wilson, seconded by Rick Hollis) to close nominations for president. The motion passed. Jim Dinsmore was elected with a show of hands. Dinsmore called for nominations for vice-president from the floor. There were none. It was moved (Beth Proescholdt, seconded by Carol Thompson) that nominations for vice-president be closed. The motion passed and Bob Cecil was elected with a show of hands. Dinsmore indicated that Jim Sinclair wished to withdraw his name from consideration for a two year term on the Board of Directors. He then called for nominations from the floor for the Board of Directors. The nominating committee met briefly and nominated Laura Jackson. Also nominated were Jim Sandrock and Mark Proescholdt. It was moved (Bob Cecil, seconded by Ray Cummins) to close nominations. Elected in a ballot vote were Mark Proescholdt, Diane Porter, and Carol Thompson. Dinsmore thanked outgoing Board members Carl Bendorf, Bob Cecil, and Jim Sinclair.

Dinsmore informed members that Bob Myers has resigned as the spring field reports editor for *Iowa Bird Life*. Steve Dinsmore has been appointed to replace him pending approval by the Publications Committee.

Members were reminded that the birdline has a new number and constantly needs reports.

#### *Announcements*

I.O.U. T-shirts were offered for sale at the meeting. These are a fund raiser for the organization.

Dinsmore introduced Jim Hansen, the new non-game biologist for Iowa. He is now working with the Breeding Bird Atlas project.

Hazel Diggs, long time I.O.U. member from southwest Iowa recently passed away.

Jim Hansen announced that there will be a statewide Bluebird conference on September 9th. There will also be a Trumpeter Swan conference this fall in Minnesota.



# LETTERS

## FERRUGINOUS HAWKS

FROM JOSEPH K. BROWN

The purpose of this letter is to comment on the paper by Barbara L. Wilson, "Records of Ferruginous Hawk in Iowa" (*Iowa Bird Life* 58:4). One prime reference, Bailey's *The Raptorial Birds of Iowa* (Iowa Geological Survey Bulletin No. 6, Des Moines, 1918), was not cited. This omission deprives *Iowa Bird Life* readers of Ms. Wilson's comments on Bert Heald Bailey's very interesting records and text about the hawks and owls occurring throughout an early and sparsely-settled Iowa. Additionally, in her list of Ferruginous Hawk records on page 96, the 25 June, 1901 record originally appeared in Anderson (1907) not DuMont (1933) as the author has presented it.

One reaction to Wilson's article is for the reader to be left with the impression that nearly all early records are to be suspect—an unfortunate circumstance. The abilities of field observers of the past are thus called into question and this is entirely unwarranted. The writer of this letter can say from personal experience that the observational powers of such as DuMont, Musgrove, Pierce, and Stiles were indeed respectable; the current adjective would be 'awesome'; perhaps 'prodigious' would be even nearer the mark.

The Ferruginous Hawk is a very large and beautiful species which well deserves its former Linnean generic name *Archibuteo*. Its size alone is virtually diagnostic and the reported records of this bird should not be casually dismissed because they have not been made recently.

10414 Applegate Drive, San Antonio, Texas 78230

## AUTHOR'S REPLY

BARBARA L. WILSON

Mr. Brown's letter touches on the major problem I encountered when writing about past sightings of the Ferruginous Hawk in Iowa. Before discussing this, however, a note on references.

I saw Bailey's account of the Ferruginous Hawk in *The Raptorial Birds of Iowa* but did not cite it because it provided no information from which to judge the accuracy of the sightings it reported and because it summarized sightings published elsewhere. I preferred to cite the original or more descriptive publication. I do feel that Bailey's information on the hawk's range (Western United States, wandering casually to Iowa) is correct. DuMont's 1933 reference to the June 25, 1901 record is cited in preference to Anderson's 1907 reference because DuMont provides more information about the bird. I assume that he examined the specimen. However, I was remiss in not citing Anderson as well.

Our editor, Tom Kent, had to request the review of the Ferruginous Hawk sightings several times because I was terribly slow to write it. My problem was that I could not decide how to deal with past records that I believe are in most cases correct, but for which there is little or no supporting evidence. On

the one hand, some of the observers reporting the species, including those Mr. Brown mentions, truly were fine field ornithologists. The Ferruginous Hawk is, as Mr. Brown states, relatively easy to identify by size and shape, if one is familiar with both it and the Red-tailed Hawk. Also, many of the early records refer to dead birds, and the Ferruginous Hawk is almost impossible to misidentify in the hand due to the feathered tarsi.

I had some reservations, however, for even the best birders do make mistakes. One of the early written descriptions of Ferruginous Hawk explains characteristics considered useful for identifying the species, characteristics not at all diagnostic. Also, most Iowa birders are not familiar enough with Ferruginous Hawk to correctly identify it unless they get an excellent look at one. When deciding how to handle specimens examined long ago and now lost, I would be haunted by a dark-phase Ferruginous Hawk at University of Nebraska at Lincoln, misidentified as Rough-legged Hawk for years. Might not the reciprocal misidentification occur? A surprising percentage of Iowa specimens are described as dark-phase birds.

I personally believe that many, perhaps most, of the early Ferruginous Hawk records are correct, especially those involving light-phase birds examined in the hand. Ferruginous Hawk was more common in the past and doubtless wandered into Iowa more often. Unfortunately, however, most of the early specimens are lost. Early reports include no description or small scraps of description and cannot be evaluated. Although a majority of these records are probably correct, it is impossible to know which ones. A different standard of evidence prevailed in the past; if a bird could not be shot, it was enough for an acknowledged good birder to report that he had seen an interesting species. I felt I had to apply the current standard that requires some information others can evaluate. Therefore, I do consider nearly all early records to be suspect, when considered individually. I write this while knowing that DuMont, Musgrove, Pierce, Stiles, and some of the other reporters were fine birders. It is this dilemma which so slowed my writing.

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## USE OF TAPED CALLS TO STUDY OWLS

FROM THOMAS W. CARPENTER

Some comments on the note that recently appeared in *Iowa Bird Life* on Barred Owl responses to taped calls (Trapp 1989) seem warranted. Trapp states he was unable to locate any instances of owls being attacked by other owls when responding to taped calls. There are at least two instances where this occurred when owls responded to vocal imitations of their calls: (1) Rea (1968) observed one Eastern Screech-Owl attack another Eastern Screech-Owl; and (2) Maslow (1983, p. 66) reports an Eastern Screech-Owl that was preyed upon by a Great Horned Owl. When owls are excited by taped calls they frequently continue vocalizing for long periods after the observers leave, which could make them easy prey for larger owls (Carpenter 1985, Smith and Carpenter 1987). The fact that owls as large as Barred (Bent 1938), Spotted (Forsman et. al. 1984), and Great Gray (Duncan 1987) have been ob-



served in the diets of Great Horned Owls suggests that this matter should not be taken lightly, even with large owls.

Prolonged and frequent use of taped calls disrupts the normal activities of owls, such as hunting, courtship, and the feeding of young (Smith and Carpenter 1987). Also, taped calls may scare birds off their territories or cause them to modify the boundaries of their territories (Smith and Carpenter 1987). Repeated use of taped calls causes some birds to cease responding to them (Smith et. al. 1987, Smith and Carpenter 1987). As pointed out by Trapp, taped calls may be very useful as a census technique. However, repeated and/or prolonged use of taped calls, particularly at the same locations, should be avoided.

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#### AUTHOR'S REPLY

DOUGLAS E. TRAPP

The incidents cited by Thomas Carpenter of which Screech-Owls attacked one another or were attacked by a Great Horned Owl after being called by taped owl vocalizations cannot be seriously used as proof that such tapes caused the attacks. Carpenter further states that owls as large as the Barred, Spotted, and Great Gray have been observed in the diets of Great Horned Owls, but does not mention the fact that Great Horned Owl diets vary much more than any other owl species and that Great Horned Owls will prey upon any animal that it can kill and consume. Other large owls are known to prey upon smaller or less aggressive owls and other birds. The fact that certain observers, after having played owl calling tapes, have witnessed owls attacking one another only shows that someone was there to be a witness. Owls attack one another much more frequently than is generally believed or discussed; this is evident from analysis of owl pellets.

I agree that the prolonged and frequent use of taped calls disrupts the normal activities of owls. However, Carpenter is speculating that taped calls may scare birds off their territories or cause them to modify the boundaries. I did not discuss such speculation in my manuscript as I feel that further

studies of the use of owl calling tapes is warranted by such speculation. I still contend that I have seen no evidence that taped owl vocalizations are detrimental to owls, although I agree that it is probably not wise to use such tapes in a harassing manner, and caution should be exercised when using taped calls for owls.

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## FROM THE EDITOR

I am pleased to see that people are submitting letters. Matt Kenne started it—there were many favorable comments to his letter, and others were stimulated to write. Letters are a nice informal way to stir up discussion on interesting issues. When you send a letter, please indicate whether it is for publication. Letters will be reviewed and edited for style and returned to the author for proofing and corrections prior to publication. If a letter pertains to an article in *Iowa Bird Life*, the author(s) will be given an opportunity for rebuttal.

In this issue we welcome Steve Dinsmore to the editorial staff as Spring Field Reports Editor. For a college student, he brings an amazing degree of birding experience and writing ability to the job. He, like the other Field Reports editors, may be contacting you to write a note on a rare bird sighting.

Material has been coming in faster this year than last, but we still need more. I would like to run more birding area articles. I do a lot of editing of birding area articles to make them consistent in style and content. If you would like to work jointly on a birding area article, I would be happy, time permitting, to visit the area with you and help lay out the article.

I would also appreciate hearing what you like best and least about the journal. Send your suggestions for articles.

You will notice a few small changes in this issue. I have right justified the page numbers in the Contents to see if they are more readable. I have added headings with a gray background for Notes, I.O.U. Business, Letters, and From the Editor. A new version of the word processor that I use (Microsoft Word 5.0) allows more flexibility, ease, and accuracy of placement of photos, tables, maps, and other illustrations.